ETCHINGS OF THE MASTER

JOHN T. McFARLAND

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ETCHINGS OF THE MASTER

BY

JOHN T. McFARLAND

"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am."—John 13.13.

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TO MY WIFE

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ETCHINGS OF THE MASTER

The Gift of Eternity

JESUS was laid on the bosom of Mary as the gift of eternity, for his birth at Bethlehem was not the beginning of his existence. To the wondering shepherds and the worshiping wise men he seemed none other than the child of a day; but, in fact, he came into time out of an eternal past. To the manger-birth, from which his life began to be reckoned in days and years, he came from a dateless pre-existence. To the humiliation of that birth he descended from the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. He was the maker of his own cradle; for the great earth that received him, and rocked him into the peace of human sleep, was the work of his own hands; for the world was made by him, and the sky-canopy of blue and stars that hung over his planet-cradle he had also woven and stretched out, for without him was not anything made that was made. The shepherds worshiped and wondered; the wise men adored and brought great gifts. And they did well; for though they did not understand, they felt that, somehow, the great God had identified himself with the Babe.

Christ's Preexistence

THE background of Christ's preëxistence comes out occasionally in his life and gives heightened impressiveness to his words and works. But that thought was too great and overwhelming for the understanding of those with whom he talked, and so, for the most part, he held it submerged in his own consciousness. But at times, perhaps for the very confusion of his enemies, he so spoke to men as to indicate that he carried in his heart the consciousness of the everlasting God, and that he had come into time from before all time. "Before Abraham was, I am." The Jehovah of the Old Testament and the Christ of the New Testament are one and the same. Christ was that "Angel of the Lord" who went before Israel in their conquest of Canaan. What interest does this give to that night incident before the walls of Jericho, when Joshua, his mind and heart full of the great things that were about to be accomplished, went forth alone in the silent night, while his great army slept; when, "Behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as prince of the host of Jehovah am I now come. And Joshua fell on

his face to the earth, and did worship him, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the prince of Jehovah's host said unto Joshua, Put off thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy." That Prince of the Lord's host, who, sword in hand, talked with Joshua that night under the stars, was none other than the Christ, the Captain of our salvation. It was Christ who called Abraham from his far home in the East, who made covenant with him under the Syrian stars; it was Christ who wrestled with Jacob that fateful night and blessed him at the breaking of the day; it was Christ who spoke to Moses in the burning bush and talked with him face to face on the smoking mount; it was Christ who spoke to Gideon and gave him the repeated sign of the fleece and the dew; it was Christ who stood by the bedside of the child Samuel on that night of destiny for Israel and put upon his forehead the seal of prophecy; it was Christ who caused Isaiah's lips to be touched with the live coal from off the altar, and said to him: "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" It was Christ whom Ezekiel saw when, on far Chebar's banks, the heavens were opened and he saw visions of God, and who said to him, "Son

of man, stand upon thy feet and I will speak unto thee." It was Christ, "One in appearance like unto the Son of God," who walked in the flame with the three young men who would not bow down to the golden image. It was Christ whom Daniel saw as "the Ancient of Days, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool, and his throne like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire." It was Christ, everywhere, and always, from the hour when in the lost paradise the Lord walked in the garden and gave to the banished pair the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, down to the close of the era of prophecy when he said to Malachi: "Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Christ everywhere and always! His is the august figure that moves up and down the centuries of Old Testament history, the Lord of prophets, priests and kings; and his was the glory that filled all the gorgeous ritual and majestic ceremony of the tabernacle and the temple.

IN his human birth Jesus became a part of the world's sweetest and most primitive joy—the joy that awakens when it is said, "A child is born." Only brutalized or perverted natures do not feel that thrill. In the mansion in the great city, or in the lonely cabin out on the rim of the world, this joy is the same. Its springs lie far under all the conventions and accidents of life. Poverty and wealth have nothing to do with it. Bed of straw on manger floor, or queen's couch canopied with silk and gold, it is all the same. The birth-song is the note of the world's generic happiness, that, in human kind, is one with the joy of the bird that flutters and sings above her nestlings, and with that yet more primitive heart-quiver that runs through all lower life with the shooting of a seed and the opening of a flower. And so Jesus entered the stream of human joy not halfway down its course but at its fountain head. Evermore, since Bethlehem, young mothers will think of him when they first feel the soft touch of baby fingers on their breasts, and the strong man will think of him when, with deep joy and pride, he first lifts up a little child and says, "This is my son."

The World's Primitive Joy

The Child's Prophet

BY his entrance into human life through the gate of birth Jesus made himself the Child's Prophet. There had been other prophets before him; but they were the man's prophets, the prophets of the mature and the grown. But Jesus began by being the Prophet of Childhood; and that made him at last in the highest sense the Prophet of universal humanity. And he became the Child's Prophet by himself becoming a child, and thus showing that the possibilities of the infinite may be locked up in a child's heart. No one may think meanly hereafter of a child because of its frailty and helplessness, for the omniscience and the omnipresence and the omnipotence of God lay latent in the Child of Bethlehem. For this is the marvel and the fathomless mystery of Christ's birth, that he started just where every child starts, in utter ignorance and weakness and germinality; and yet there were in him all the potentialities of the infinite God. And so Christ prophesies over every cradle, and is forever lifting up the babes of the world, and saying, "They are little, and weak, and know nothing at all; but they shall grow into the wisdom and strength of archangels, and their heads shall be among the stars."

ABOUT the child-Christ stand only a few figures. There are glimpses of great numbers, but the group is small. First of all, an Angel—for he of the three annunciations was the same. Back of him, on the night of the birth, was a heavenly host, but it was vague and impersonal. On the human side, central and where the white light falls, Mary, the mother, the joy and yet the despair of the poets and the painters. By her side, but slightly in the shadow, Joseph, the patient, in whose soul of commonplace, touched with mystery, the great masses of toiling but praying men were brought close to the radiant and the celestial. No other type could be substituted for Joseph. The millions of the shops and the fields, who bear up the burdens of the world, were represented in him. In him Labor waited on Love, and thus only has labor ever been glorified. And then a little further back, though they come first in time, stand Zacharias and Elisabeth, upon whom falls, if not the white, yet the golden, light; who represented the world of Worship, as Joseph represented the world of Work, and whose humble home among the hills of Judæa, where was born the child who was to be the Crier in the Wilderness, stands for every par-

The Group About the Child

sonage and manse and rectory the earth around. And then the shepherds, and next the Magi, a little further out and on either side of the group, repeating again, in another form, worship and work, as first expressed by Zacharias and Joseph. And last of all, in the temple, where the toilers brought their sacrifices and where priests blessed and prophets spoke, Simeon, the aged and holy, and Anna, the soul-illumined woman, whose exultant songs when they saw the Holy Child, expressed the hope and the joy of humanity in relation to its Saviour and Redeemer. There was no chance in the formation of that group about the Child. It was a chosen company.

Jesus a Real Child

THINK always of the Christ-child as a natural human child. In coming into human life the Son of God chose to walk the whole course of human experience. He took no advantage, he claimed no exemptions. He was born as others are born, he made himself helpless in a mother's arms as other children are helpless, he came under the common law of growth and development, he was taught, and learned, and strengthened in mind and spirit as others are and do. The

plain accounts of the gospels leave no question but that he was the Son of God in the supremest sense. But he took to himself no advantage through his divinity. In his birth his divinity was utterly humanized. The Babe of Bethlehem was no monstrosity of omniscience and omnipotence in the undeveloped brain and body of an infant. He was a real, not a sham child, as later he was a real, not a sham man. And so the Gospels do not make his childhood marvelous and miraculous. He is not kept in the light of publicity or the atmosphere of wonder. No marvel-tales are told of those early years at Nazareth. There were no marvels. He passed those years, as all childhood should be passed, in obscurity and simplicity. His mother was not relieved of any motherly care or responsibility in connection with him. He had no privileges denied to other children. Mary and Joseph went every year to the passover at Jerusalem, but Jesus remained at home, as did other boys, until he was twelve years of age. The painters have put a halo about the head of the child of the canvas; there was none about the head of the actual child in the home of the carpenter. A haloed child and a miracle-working child would have been carried down to Jerusalem for the amaze-

ment of the nation at all of the great gatherings. About such a child, indeed, at Nazareth the gaping multitude would always have gathered. But there was absolutely nothing of that. And so the home at Nazareth is the type of all natural, wholesome, virtuous human homes.

Jesus at Adolescence

THE gospels give us no psychological studies of the Christ-child. They tell us nothing about the stages of his development. He is no Froebelized child. He kept no child's diary to record his first reflections. No one seems ever to have analyzed him. But that is no reflection on child psychology nor Froebel's philosophy of child-training. Plants and flowers were in the world a very long while before the science of botany was developed. Science at its best only tells us how nature does things. Nature had been doing things many ages before science opened its notebooks. So Jesus grew up true to the laws of life, though there was no one present to name and classify those laws. But when the Gospels give us one glimpse of him between infancy and manhood they present him marvelously true to our last discoveries in the study of the child. For we see him at the age of

twelve at that crisis-point where spiritual consciousness most commonly awakens. The lad Jesus, in the temple, interested in religious things, asking questions of the great teachers, reaching out after truth, open to spiritual instruction and guidance, is simply the type of the natural human boy everywhere. He is in the junior and intermediate departments of every Sunday school. He will be asking questions of thousands of teachers every Sabbath of every year. We must not fail to recognize and understand him. Jesus's mother did not quite fathom him, not on the divine side of his nature simply, for that did not much appear, but on his human side. For she did not see what that lingering behind and talking with the doctors of the law meant. So she chided him. And he, wondering at her, said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's house?" That is where the unperverted boy will naturally be drawn not far from the age of twelve. We must look for him there and become wise to deal with him there.

The Child-heart in Christ

JESUS declared of little children that they are of the kingdom of heaven; and that the natural man must be transformed into the spirit of a child as a condition to entrance into the kingdom. That at once sets us thinking of Jesus himself in the character of a child, for Jesus's own nature and character represent all the qualities of the kingdom. His was the heart of a child; his in the highest degree was the greatness of the little child. Can we construe him in this character? Can we understand what those child-qualities in him were? It is very difficult because it is really so very simple. We will be able to interpret the child-heart that was in Jesus only so far as we have in ourselves the child-heart through which to view him. There are really very few people who understand little children. The sad thing is that so few parents understand what the real nature of their own children is. The child-spirit was extinct in them long before their children were born, and the little ones look up into eyes incapable of comprehending them. This is not a question of child psychology. That no more reveals the qualities of the kingdom of God in the child than child pedagogy. The mere mental pedagogist, however expert, does not see this divine element

in the child. One must have been converted and become as a little child in order to see what it is in the child that made him great in the sight of Jesus, and to see in Jesus what it was that made him the soul-brother of every little one in the world. Do we see it? Do we feel it? It is not necessary to define it—perhaps it is too fine and divine for that; but as we look at Jesus through eyes Spirit-lighted, and with souls emptied of pride, and greed, and passion, and stilled into an inner peace that is untouched by the warring winds of the world, can we see in him the Eternal Child, whose eyes are like the fountains of primal light, and whose smile is an overflow of the joy of God?

SEE Jesus in the settings of his temptation—not the inanimate desolateness of the wilderness, but in the vital relations. "And he was with the wild beasts; and angels ministered unto him." What a reach of contrast is that! But there was in that the symbolism of life's testing and strengthening. Every great soul must have its fight and win its kingship down on the plane of the wild beasts, where the natures of lions and tigers and wolves and jackals are embodied in men.

The Wild Beasts and the Angels

Where such brute natures and passions inhabit, there is the wilderness, for the man of cruel and rapacious soul turns a palace into a den and a paradise into a jungle. Down there, where the beasts lurk and snarl and attack, the soul must win its right to immortality. And so Jesus, in preparation for his life's work, did not retire into a sylvan spot, where he might meditate under the spell of flowers and bird-songs and peaceful fields, but he went among the blasted hills, where wild beasts had their lairs, and there, in nakedness of soul, fought out the issues with the powers of darkness, of which the wild beasts were the fittest symbols. And later on, in the maddened mob at Nazareth that would have cast him over the precipice, in the snarls of envy and malice that were continually heard, in the brute roar and bellowing of the multitude on the day of his trial and crucifixion, he heard again the cries of the wild beasts that were in the hills about him during those forty days of fasting and prayer. But the angels ministered unto him, then and afterward. And though he may not be aware of it, and may think himself forsaken and forgotten, the angels are always nigh unto the man who is fighting the battle of his soul down among the beasts.

ONCE for all let us settle it that the temptation of Jesus was no fiction. If we bring to the study of that wilderness experience any conception of Jesus that makes his temptation a mere shadow-show, we might just as well turn away from it, for it can have no meaning for us. What would the *death* of Christ mean to us if we were assured that he only *seemed* to suffer, that his agony was only a semblance, not a reality? Atonement and redemption cannot be accomplished by one who uses his divinity to escape the sufferings through which men must pass. A whole and a real man went to Calvary, and so Calvary has abiding human interest. And such a man went also into the wilderness of temptation. It was no warrior clothed with impervious mail that went into an arena to be smitten with mere lances of moonbeams. It was a naked soul, open to wounds and death, temptable, as the men he came to help are temptable, claiming no immunity from assault, taking no refuge behind any supernatural protection, and accepting life's common terms of trial and tempting. No matter whether we can understand it or not, that must have been so, else the temptation of Jesus can mean nothing to the man down among the dragons fight-

Christ's Temptation no Fiction

ing his own battle, which he knows to be deadly reality. Under the searching power of motives which went down to the roots of his nature, and put every fiber of his soul to the utmost strain, he settled the question, which every man must settle before he can enter upon any work that is worth the doing, whether or not he was to do his own will or the will of God. Had he deviated there, by the slightest angle of divergence, all would have been lost—for nothing but a straight line of inflexible self-sacrifice could have led from the wilderness to the cross; or if the cross had been reached by any other line, it would have been without worth.

Master of the Fishes

JESUS showed himself to be the Master of the Fishes, which was something more than being Master of the Nets. Peter and the others were masters of the nets—knew how to make and mend and cast and draw the nets, but of the fishes they were not the masters. They did not control their comings or goings, they did not mark out their shining paths in the waters of the Galilee, nor appoint their places of secret assembly. All night long they cast and drew their nets, and cast and drew

again; but the fishes were not there, and they could not compel them. But Jesus made silent summons, and the fishes were at the place of the casting of the nets. That is the pivotal thought in this miracle-parable. The disciples were to become fishers of men. They were to learn how to weave strong meshes of persuasive and convincing speech, and how to launch out into the deeps of the world. They would become masters of the gospel nets. Yet they would find that that was not sufficient. Argument and instruction and persuasion and entreaty they would find to be as nets in empty waters, and they would toil through weary days and nights and take nothing. The masters of the nets would need the help of the Master of the Fishes. And that is the great thing about Jesus. He is the Lord of men. "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." His writ runs throughout the kingdom of humanity. Very silent is his influence, very gentle is his power, very patient is his method; but men everywhere are under the spell of his spirit. They may not know it, they may deny it; but their movements at last are being determined by his will. The nations are his, and he knows all the secret springs of a nation's life and all the currents and tides of

time. And we are beginning to perceive that when he commands his gospel-fishermen to let down their nets in any waters—in the Indian Ocean, in the China Sea, or in the Sea of Japan—he has provided the fishes for the net. Even now the nets are breaking, and the fishers are calling for help to care for the souls which have been taken. And this is the secret and the hope of success. The nets are often very poorly made and have many rents, and the fishermen are often very clumsy and unskilled. But even so, we do not wholly fail, for we have the help of the Master of the Fishes, who sends such a multitude into our nets that we can scarcely fail to take many.

Christ's Knowledge of Hearts

HOW did Jesus perceive how men reasoned in their hearts? "He was omniscient," it is answered. That would explain it, certainly, but it would explain it away, and leave little of vital interest in it. There was Jesus, a real man in the midst of a human company, saying to a palsied man, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." And the arbiters of theology standing by were resenting in their hearts the assumption by a man of the authority to forgive sins. And Jesus perceived

what was going on in their hearts. And shall we say that he perceived it as God perceives what is taking place at the heart of the globe, or what is happening on worlds beyond the reach of the telescope? Then his perception teaches us nothing, for that would take him wholly out of connection with our spirits. But Jesus came to reveal human nature as well as the divine nature. We need not deny Christ's omniscience when we say that this reading of the hearts of the scribes did not require it. It was the exercise of a power in him that is in every man; greater in him than in any other man not because he was divine, but because he was more perfectly human than any man. We must never forget that Jesus was that. And so in this case spiritual intuition, which is a human and not simply a divine power, was perfectly illustrated in him. His spirit was so perfectly keyed that it caught every wave and vibration of thought and feeling that came from every quarter. His soul was like some fine instrument that registers the slightest changes of temperature. So crystal-clear was his mind, and so tranquil, that all things were reflected in it as in a mirror. In him the unconscious intuition of the child was carried up into the definite consciousness of the man. And

so he always moved and held his place among men easily and confidently, because he knew men. Their masks and guile and false speech and veiled purposes never misguided him, for he saw the realities. And to the pure in heart belongs this power, in kind at least, if not in degree, which Jesus had, to read the hearts of men.

The Self-Abandon of Jesus

TAKE such a day as that first great Sabbath of miracles in Capernaum, and it reveals a quality of the spirit of Jesus that is, perhaps, the most characteristic feature of his ministry. It was the quality of absolute self-abandon. We are made to feel when we come to that day that Jesus was not giving himself to his ministry by measure, but without measure. It was an outpouring of self in full volume. The whole of it, too, was self-giving. He had no external goods to bestow. There were the people with their sore needs, and there was himself with whatever power he had to serve them. If he did anything, he must give himself. And he did not hesitate, and he did not make any reserve. He put all the resources of his life at the service of the people. His time, his bodily strength, his

mind, his heart, his supernatural powers—everything—were poured into his work of helping. The need of the world perpetually called to him, and his heart answered in passionate longing, as the woodsman answers to the call of the forest, as the sailor answers to the voices of the sea. We will not understand Jesus if we do not appreciate this world-passion that was in his heart. We will pity him in his toil and deprivation, in what will seem to us hard self-denial and painful humiliation. But for his world-passion it would have been such, if he had done what he did. In truth, it was to him measureless joy, because the passion for it was in his heart. His soul ran out to the service of humanity as the river runs eagerly to the sea. Let us not pity Jesus, as if he were doing some hard and repugnant work, as if he were holding himself to some excruciating sacrifice from which his nature shrank. We miss the great thing in him if we think of him so. His work—just such work as he did on that Sabbath in Capernaum—was his meat and drink. And this spirit prevailed throughout his life. He reached onward even to the cross, as the heart of the bridegroom runs out to his bride. We have held some theories of the atonement which

have surrounded the whole life and death of Christ with a wrong atmosphere and given to them a wrong color. The great and beautiful thing which we are beginning to see is the gladness and unmeasured fullness with which God gave himself for the world in Christ. The atonement was not a divine *Miserere,* but a *Jubilate.*

"Christus Absolvator"

CHRISTUS ABSOLVATOR—Christ the Forgiver of Sins—no wonder the scribes were amazed and staggered when he assumed that character and prerogative. They were right when they asked, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" Jesus did not deny the implication. He knew perfectly well that it was blasphemy for a mere man to assume to forgive sins. No stronger declaration of his divinity, therefore, could have been made by him than when he said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." In saying that he meant it to be understood that he was divine. So let us view him—the great Absolver. If he were not that, everything else that he is or might be would be of little worth. His teachings, which set up such high standards, would aggravate human wretchedness, if he did not provide for

the forgiveness of sin. The world may get on without many things—science, literature, art—but forgiveness is a necessity. In this high character of absolver Jesus stands unique and large over against the world's universal and most urgent need. If he has the authority to forgive sins, then the world must turn to him at last, for the world will find nowhere else any remedy for its sin. And only second in wonder to the fact that Jesus exercised the authority to forgive is the spirit in which he did it. Men had been accustomed to think that much clamor and lamentation and sacrifice were necessary to secure pardon. Jesus granted it without any ceremony whatever. We still incline to condition God's forgiveness upon a good deal of theological machinery. It must be sought after in such and such a fashion, it may be hoped for only upon the basis of faith in a certain view of Christ's atonement. It is doubtful whether Jesus had any theory of an atonement. If he had, he kept it wholly in the background when he forgave sins. We incline to make forgiveness difficult; Jesus made it easy. We have represented God as reluctant to pardon, stickling for formal terms; Jesus showed us God glad to forgive, concerned only that the sinner desires forgiveness. Study

Jesus granting pardon to the man let down through the roof, to the woman who anointed his feet in the house of Simon the Pharisee, and to the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, and it will be felt that he meant to encourage every sinner in the world to hope for mercy.

The Calmness of Jesus

THE impression of Christ's calmness and ease will grow upon us as we study his life. He never manifested the slightest uneasiness under any circumstances in which he was ever involved. At his baptism rugged John was evidently agitated, but Jesus was calm. In the crisis-shocks of his temptations he resisted the assaults of Satan, not desperately, as one hard pressed, but serenely, as one without fear. At Nazareth, when he announced himself to be the Messiah whom Isaiah described, it was in language very simple. His words stirred the audience to madness, but he was serenely self-possessed. And with what calmness did he work his miracles! In the very greatest of them there was never any strain of extreme effort. The supernatural seemed no more difficult for him than the natural, and the extraordinary was

done with the same simplicity as the ordinary. He was never thrown off his balance by any sudden emergency. We never find him perplexed or confused, never uncertain what to do or to say. He never hesitated, never vacillated, never reconsidered, never modified his teachings, never abandoned a position which he had taken. And yet there was this remarkable thing about the calmness of Jesus, that it was not passionless. Men of great self-possesion are often cold and incapable of emotion, and we speak of them as men of iron will. Not so with Jesus. His self-mastery was not that of a Stoic. He was full-stored with all natural human passions, and his sensibilities were of the finest and most delicate kind. He had sympathy unbounded, love without measure, and tenderness passing that of women. But he was the master, not the servant, of his passions and emotions. But his calmness finds its explanation finally in a consciousness that held greater depths than that of any man—a sense of power adequate for any task that came to him, a clearness of knowledge that made doubt impossible, and a simplicity of unsullied innocence that is the soul of peace. His calmness was like the calmness of the sea, untroubled in its unmeasured depths.

CHRIST'S highest office was that of a teacher. But next to that he was a healer of human sicknesses. The second, indeed, in the interest of the people, frequently, if not generally, overshadowed the first; and even yet there are those who seem to attach more importance to his miracles, of which healing was the most common, than to his teachings. This class of his "works" must have had great importance in his own estimate or he would not have made them so prominent. Let us consider Christ the Healer, and discover, if possible, the motives which moved him in this line of his activities. And I think we must rule out of the first place in his thought the force and value of his miracles of healing as evidences of his high claims. They had value and force in that direction, but that was incidental rather than primary in the purpose of Jesus. It robs his works of their highest interest if we are compelled to think that Jesus was continually seeking to demonstrate his divinity. The highest demonstration of that must be moral and not physical. It is on a range very much higher when we think of Christ's miracles of healing as simply spontaneous expressions of his pity for human suffering. Sickness is pathetic. It touches

Christ's Motive in Healing

little children, and their sport and laughter cease, and they toss and moan and cry. It touches the strong man, and he weakens and wastes, and the voice, once full of the confidence of command, is reduced to a broken whisper from thin and parched lips, and his hands, once like iron for war or work, lie pale and emaciated and helpless. Jesus was tender and deeply sympathetic. He pitied sick folk, and healed them because he was sorry for them, and for those who were troubled and grieved because of the sick ones in their homes. And this view brings Jesus very close to all our beds of pain. The cripples, the paralytics, the consumptives, the cancer-tortured, the fever-scorched, the suffering of every class, have in Jesus one who knows and cares and pities. But there was evidently in the heart of Christ in all his healing something that ran deeper even than pity. The deepest pathos of sickness as Jesus viewed it was sin, which is its generic cause. His diagnosis penetrated deeper than that of any physician then or now. Bodily sickness, after all, was only a symptom of a profounder disease; and he knew that it cannot be said, "There shall be no more sickness," until it can be said, "There is no more sin." Hence when Jesus had compassion

on the sick and healed them he was really giving token of his power and his purpose to cure the sin of the world.

The Beatitudes Self-Unfolding of Christ

WE commonly think of the beatitudes in their bearing on human life. They give us Christ's conception of what our character and conduct should be. But suppose we think of them as self-expressions of Christ himself, as unfoldings of his deepest moral consciousness. This they certainly are. The portrait of Jesus himself is drawn in these "Blesseds." They are simply aspects of his experience. They furnish analysis of his character. This is important in view of the fact that the gospels contain nothing corresponding to the characterizations and estimates which biographies usually give of their subjects. No one of the evangelists undertakes to tell us what the distinguishing characteristics of Jesus were. They do not stop to comment on his virtues and the qualities which made him great and admirable. The Divine Mind which directed the evangelists in writing the memoirs of their Master had a better way of setting his character before us than by any studied and formal estimate.

That plan was to give us the revelation of Jesus in his teachings and in his work. He was what he taught men to be. So that Jesus was the incarnation of the beatitudes; his was the perfect illustration of the blessed life. We are to think of him, therefore, as always in a state of the highest happiness—not in any superficial sense of pleasant feeling, but in the possession and experience of the highest good. The spirit and temper of his mind were such as issue in perfect peace. All the blessings of the kingdom of heaven were his, because his life was the life of the kingdom. He saw God through the medium of a heart untaintedly pure. He was unvexed by any distracting passion or craving. Humility, meekness, the love of righteousness, the temper of mercy, an encompassing comfort that absorbed sorrow, and the noble sense of rectitude under persecution that introduced him to the fellowship of the royal company of the martyrs of all time—such was his state of blessedness. We will not fail to look forward through the beatitudes to the ideal which they reveal for us. But we should not fail to also look back through them, that we may see in their light and as his self-expression what was the character and soul-life of him who uttered them.

The Master of Prayer

JESUS was the Master of Prayer. He was and is the one absolutely competent authority to teach men how to pray. The request for instruction came from his disciples after they had observed him engaged in prayer. They had, doubtless, often so observed him. There must have been something in the spirit in which he prayed, something of such simple and sincere reverence in his very attitude and in the tones in which he spoke, as to deeply impress his disciples. They were accustomed to see and hear men pray. In the temple, in the market places, on the street corners, in the synagogues, the Pharisees prayed with many words and much ostentation. But here was prayer of another kind. It evidently was not to be heard of men, and yet it was not ashamed in the sight and hearing of men. When their Master was praying, the place, whether by sea or on the mountain, was clothed with a sacred, silent glory. They knew that he had his hours of prayer to which they were not admitted. They had seen him, after the turmoil of the day had ceased and the stars had come forth, go out with the deep look of soul-hunger in his face, and take the paths leading to silent places far up among the hills. They knew his mission; and in the morn-

ings after such holy vigils they had seen him come back to them refreshed as with the wine of life, with face illumined from within by a replenished light, and strong to take upon him for another day the burdens of the suffering multitudes. In the presence of their Master as he prayed their own poor ways of prayer must have seemed very clumsy and blundering to the disciples. No wonder they besought him to teach them how to pray. He knew God; he could tell them how to address him. He had access through all the gates of grace; he could teach them how to knock. And Jesus is still the Master of Prayer. In his school alone can we learn how to pray. And just because Jesus has taught men to pray, and still tells them how to find the sources of spiritual life and power, he outranks all other teachers.

Why Did Jesus Pray?

JESUS taught his disciples to pray. We easily understand why that was proper and necessary. There are many and great reasons why men ought always to pray. But Jesus himself prayed. It was a constant habit throughout his life. Why did *he* pray? Was it merely that it might serve as an example to his disciples? That would take the

reality out of his praying, and make it a mere empty spectacle. There are two things which make us wonder why Christ prayed. The first is his sinlessness. It is a sad comment on our lives that we have come to associate prayer so almost inseparably with seeking for pardon. We confess our sins and pray for forgiveness; and that, because of the large place sin occupies in our thought, is often the chief thing with us in prayer. But Jesus was without sin. Why, then, should he pray? The second and weightier thing that gives rise to this question is our thought of his divinity. He was God, we say; why, then, being God and having all power, should he pray? Could he not have all that he desired without the asking? This difficulty grows out of our incapacity to comprehend the union in Christ of the divine and the human; or perhaps it grows out of our unwillingness frankly to acknowledge and give full proportion to the human element in Christ, lest we think less highly than we ought of his divinity. In the perplexity which this question represents we are thinking of Christ as God as unmodified and not limited by the incarnation. Christ, the Son of Mary, stands in other relations, and is subject to other conditions, than Christ, the Son of God, before

his birth in the flesh. After that birth all the necessities of universal human life attach to him. In becoming man he laid aside the great prerogatives of the Deity and made himself dependent upon his Father even as we are dependent upon him. His life was one of fellowship and communion with God, and prayer is one of the necessary phases of such a life. And his habit of prayer proved, what also the experience of the saintliest men and women sustains, that, so far from sin being the chief impulse to prayer, the heart is never so deeply moved to prayer as when the consciousness of purity fills it with untroubled peace.

Christ and Prayer

JESUS believed in and practiced prayer. That prayer was a constant habit with him we know from very many references to it by the writers of the Gospels (Matt. 14. 23; Mark 1. 35; Luke 3. 21; 5. 16; 6. 12; 9. 18; etc.), and we know how he taught and encouraged his disciples to pray. The seventeenth chapter of John represents the greatest of his recorded prayers, and gives us to see how exalted and rich and intimate were his communings with his Father. But the chief thing is that he prayed and constantly recom-

mended prayer. We have our seasons of doubt when we question whether it is worth while to pray. At such times it is well for us to take our place by Christ's side and hear him pray. Has anyone ever lived in this world so likely to know about the value of prayer as Jesus? We are not surprised that Christ's great interview with his disciples in the upper room on that night preceding his crucifixion was concluded with prayer, and with a prayer so great as this. It was a fitting culmination, the only fitting culmination. All that had gone before—the repeated allusions to his approaching death, his words of comfort, his promises, and instructions—all led up to this prayer. Prayer is not confined to the crises of life, for it has its place in all common days and experiences, but life's crises demand prayer. Men may get along through ordinary experiences and persuade themselves there is no necessity for prayer, but when the day of tragedy comes, the day of great trial, and the day of death, prayer is imperative. Then if the soul cannot or will not pray, life collapses for the lack of that support which only prayer can give. And to these crisis-days, when prayer is indispensable, should be brought the strength of faith that

accumulates with the daily habit of prayer. He who prays without ceasing through all ordinary days, will know how to pray with conquering power when the day of crisis comes.

JESUS maintained toward the Old Testament Scriptures an attitude at once of respect and of superiority. They were to him the Word of God, and he referred to them as such. In his temptation he parries the thrusts of Satan with passages from the Old Testament. At Nazareth he read a section from Isaiah and declared that it was fulfilled in him. He commanded his disciples to search the Scriptures, because in them were the revelations of life, and because they testified of him. He referred people to the commandments, and when asked for the greatest commandment drew it, and a second like unto it, from the Pentateuch; and when replying to those who denied the resurrection of the dead he quoted from the Old Testament. No one will find in the teachings of Jesus an encouragement to think lightly of the ancient Scriptures. On the other hand, he always maintained an attitude of superiority in relation to them. He did not hesitate to declare the insufficiency of

Christ's Attitude Toward the Scriptures

many of their precepts. The Old Testament had not spoken the highest word of authority. Over and over again he said, "It was said by them of old time," and then made his own declaration of duty that went infinitely beyond the ancient standards. But this must be observed, that Jesus never spoke disrespectfully of the Old Testament. He expressly declared that he came not to destroy the old law, but to fulfill it. The Old Testament was not false; it was merely insufficient and partial. It was a revelation, but it was a limited revelation. Its teachings of duty were as high as was practicable in the times and for the people for which they were intended. But Jesus brought in an era of fuller light. The standards of duty, in consequence, must advance. And so Jesus treated the Old Testament as having absolute authority only in those teachings which are universal and permanent, but of limited authority in teachings which were adapted only to an age of imperfect moral light. And if we will habitually view the Old Testament as Jesus did—always with the understanding that it contains the best revelation God could make in the times and to the people when and to whom it was given—it will save us from many difficulties. The Old Testament

must never be regarded as representing the highest authority. It must always be amended by the teachings of Christ.

THE bearing of Jesus toward the church of his day is an interesting study. We must understand that the church was almost absolutely under the control of the scribes and the Pharisees, and they were the inveterate enemies of Jesus. Them he denounced in unmeasured terms, not because they rejected him, but because of their hypocrisy and corruption and oppression. But Jesus never confounded the church with the people who temporarily controlled it. Moreover, the scribes and the Pharisees were not all who had to do with the church; and of those others there were a few, at least, who were sincere and righteous. We get a glimpse in connection with the birth and infancy of Jesus of a few pure and holy people connected with the church—Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist; Simeon the aged, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and Anna the prophetess. And at least two of the Pharisees and rulers—Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa—came deeply under his influence, and finally

Christ's Attitude Toward the Church

stood forth as his friends. These were of the church; and besides them a great multitude of humble and obscure folk, who had nothing to do with the government of the church, but who faithfully observed its ordinances and ordered their lives according to the teachings of the Scriptures. Jesus included them in his thought of the church. But, evidently, the church was to Jesus an institution independent of the people who happened at the time to be connected with it. The temple was his "Father's house," even though for the time the greedy and the avaricious had turned it into a "den of thieves." The synagogue was a place set apart for prayer and instruction in the Word of God, and so he sanctioned it with his presence. We never hear him denouncing the church. He denounced those who falsified and perverted the church, but the church was other and greater than they. The real church was the kingdom of God in the world. That kingdom of necessity must take on certain organized forms and express itself in many external ways. Those forms and expressions, so far as they harmonized with the essential nature of the kingdom, Jesus approved. And we are impressed always, in the attitude which he maintained toward the religious organization of his time, that he con-

stantly saw the reality back of the artificial, the permanent underlying the temporary and passing. And we may be sure that he looks in like manner upon the church of to-day with larger, calmer eyes than ours, never deceived by mere external show, and never alienated from the real church by any false representations of it on the part of those connected with its organized forms.

HOW deep was Jesus's moral insight! Far under the surface of external action he saw to germinal essences of character. There was a radio-penetration in his look which shot through the wrappings and encasings of life to ultimate and innermost realities. Actions do not tell the whole story of the moral life. Many thoughts and desires may never issue in actions. The covetous man may not steal; the hater may not commit murder. And back of some good deeds may lie evil sentiments. Men sometimes contradict their hearts in their deeds. Jesus was always looking into the heart. But he was not a cynic and a skeptic as to human virtue. There are those who always assume that the hearts of people are evil. They shake their

The Moral Insight of Jesus

heads in the presence of apparent virtue, and say, "Only wait," or, "If you only knew." They hold every man to be in reality a knave. Not so with Jesus. He saw through and through the Pharisees, and declared their hypocrisy. The enlarged phylacteries, the long prayers, did not deceive him. But he saw not simply to hidden vice but to hidden virtue also. He looked clear through Nathanael, and declared him to be without guile. He saw great wealth of latent good in people whom others thought to be wholly evil. He saw the greater Zaccheus in the little Zaccheus. He saw the granite strength in Simon and called him Peter. He saw the jewel of virtue in the heart of Mary Magdalene, and gave her blessing while others scorned. This law of the inner life works to the credit as well as to the discredit of people. Thought and wish are often better than deed. There are those who have the spirit to give millions who have only the ability to give pennies. Jesus puts them on his millionaire list. So he did with the widow with the two mites. We must not forget that she, as well as the Pharisees, illustrates Christ's heart-penetration. And the chief thing is that Jesus had this kind of insight. It is a great comment on the translucency of his own char-

acter. Only the holiest are reliable discerners and interpreters of the hearts of others. An impure heart will not be able correctly to see either the virtue or the vice of the hearts of others. Jesus was without sin; therefore he saw all the evil and all the good in men.

THE affair of the money-changers happened a day or two before the passover. While none of them are recorded, Jesus appears to have worked miracles at that time, "and many believed on his name when they saw the miracles which he did." But in John's account occurs what must strike the attentive reader as a very significant statement. "But Jesus did not commit himself to them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." He saw into the depths of their minds and hearts and knew that the conviction produced by his miracles was superficial and momentary, and that they had no spiritual depth. So he held himself back from them. "He did not commit himself to them." He could not speak to them freely, because he saw that they could not understand nor receive his words. For Jesus

The Reserve of Jesus

spoke not simply *to* men, but to what he saw *in* men. When he came in contact with such natures as those of Nathanael and Nicodemus and Zacchæus and the woman of Samaria, they aroused him and he spoke to them the mysteries of the kingdom of God; for he saw that in them, developed or latent, to which he could speak with a great purpose. But there were others with whom he was habitually silent or reserved. There were many to whom he could not communicate himself. Their spiritual condition was such that they would not or could not receive and be profited by what he might say to them. He had rich pearls of truth, but he knew they would trample them under their feet. He reserved pearls for those who could appreciate their value. And we find in this reserve of Jesus the explanation of the form in which he cast most of his teachings. This is why he used the parable. It was intended at once to veil and reveal the truth. "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but unto them it is not given." There were those who had made themselves gross of heart and dull of hearing and blind of eyes and clouded in understanding. Therefore they had their reward; the Son of God had come into the world,

and was speaking such words of grace and truth as no man had ever spoken; speaking such things as the ears of the world's wisest and holiest men for thousands of years had intently longed even in dying to hear but had not been given to hear; and now to this great Teacher, come at last, they turned deaf ears, they could not hear him. That was their punishment, self-inflicted, that when the hour came which, had they been prepared for it, would have been the supreme and golden opportunity of all the hours of their lives, they were incapable of recognizing it; and the Son of God looked them in the face and spoke in their ears, and they were unable to recognize him, and he came and went among them and they knew him not. Little wonder, when he had finished explaining to his disciples why he spoke to the people in parables, he turned to them and exclaimed, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear."

TO have spiritual faculty is the matter of highest concern with every man, and to have lost that faculty is the weightiest of all disasters. To have the power of sight is more important than all

Soul Faculty

we have seen; to have hearing ears is more important than all we have heard. If I have seeing eyes, then all my days may be filled with visions of God's great universe; if I have hearing ears, then the million-toned orchestra of the world, with its sweep of instrumentation that runs from the faintest chirp of insect or whisper of leaf to the far roll of the majestic thunder, will play for me at morn, noon, and night. But if I am blind, in vain the beauties of the landscape, in vain the purple pomp of the dawn, in vain the argent glories of the night. If I am deaf, in vain the ravishing notes of the nightingale, in vain the witchery of human song, in vain the call of the cataract and the sea. And it is so with the soul. If we but have soul-sight and soul-hearing, we may not yet have seen much or heard much of God and truth; but as we are able to bear it he will reveal his glory to us, as we are able to receive it he will speak and we shall know. But, alas, God is forever invisible to the soul that lifts blind eyes to him; God is forever silent to the soul that cannot hear. And it should be considered that in God's Book there is the same reserve that was in Jesus in his conversation and association with men. I often come to the Bible with the impression

that it is a living thing, and from its pages a living face sometimes seems to look up into mine, and as I touch it I seem to feel the thrill of a living hand. It is not like other books. There is a divine spirit in this Book. It is not a dead thing, for it contains God's words, and God's words are spirit and life. But certain it is that this Book does not deal alike with all who come to it. To some it is open and gracious, throwing wide all its halls and chambers, full of light and full of fragrance; to others it is walled round with impregnable reserve and mystery, is locked and cold and dark. To some it never fails to speak when they come to it, and when they lay their spirit-ears against its pages they sometimes hear the throbbing strains of heavenly music. To others it is sternly silent. To some who come to it, its company of prophets and apostles, and its one sacred Presence about whom prophets and apostles gather, sit with sealed lips and give no answer. Or, if it speak, it is still in parables and its meaning is not comprehended. The Christ in the Book will not communicate himself to the superficial and fickle now, even as he would not in the days of his incarnation.

"AND Jesus knew their thoughts." "For he knew what was in man." And the first thing which we should realize is that Christ's knowledge of human nature is sympathetic and associated with love. In this respect he is distinguished from the satirist. Satire is directed to the exposure and ridicule of human weaknesses and follies. It searches after the sore spots and the diseased spots in human nature. Its mission is to humiliate and excoriate human pride. It has a keen eye for every defect, a keen scent for everything that is malodorous. Its instruments are the knife and the scalpel and the probe, which it wields, however, not with the kindly severity of the surgeon but for the pleasure of producing pain. The satirist carries no ointments or healing balsams, but drops vitriol in the wounds which he either discovers or makes. He does not sorrow but exults over human shame; he does not pity but mocks and laughs at the infirmities and vices of his fellow men. His spirit is that of the cynic, his expression is a sneer, and his descriptions of life and character are caricatures. And yet we are in the habit of thinking of the satirist as having marvelous knowledge of human nature. We read Swift and Vol-

Christ's Sympathetic Knowledge

taire, and other such masters of sarcasm, and see how mercilessly they lay open the foibles and follies and hypocrisies and shams and corruptions of human nature and human society, and we cry out, "How perfectly these men know what is in man! They have dissected human nature as the anatomist has dissected the human body, and know all of its secrets!" Now, on the contrary, it is my belief that no one more imperfectly understands human nature than the professional satirist. I would not apply to the scavenger for knowledge concerning a great city. He could tell me of its filth, he could guide me through its reeking alleys, and could take me where I could inhale its most offensive stenches. But of its magnificent streets and avenues, of its palaces, and of its humble homes of cleanliness and health, of its art galleries and libraries, rich in pictures and statuary, and the stored wisdom of the world; of its monuments and great public buildings, of its parks, and schools, and museums, and commerce; of its great factories and multiplied industries, of its organized charities and philanthropies; of its hospitals and churches, and scholars and orators, and authors and artists; of its high traditions and splendid history—of these things the scavenger

could tell me but little; of the most of them he has never heard or thought. But—he can give expert testimony on the filth of the city! I would not go to the police records, nor to the prisons and criminal courts, to get my knowledge of human society. They would show me crimes and cruelties, and infidelities and fraud, and falsehood and perjury; they would show me thieves and thugs, and burglars and murderers, and the fruits of lust and drunkenness and avarice and anger. But they would not show me the great world of faithfulness and integrity and tenderness, and self-forgetfulness and divine charity. They would not show me the honesty and bravery, and patience and generosity, and industry and economy which enrich and beautify human life. Christ knew what was in man. And I suppose that to no eyes were the faults and imperfections of human character so manifest as to his. He saw to the very heart of life. There were no lurking diseases of the soul but he saw them, even in their undeveloped germs. There was no double motive in those who came to him that he did not discover. He could put his finger, when occasion required, upon all the sore spots in man's nature. There were no whited sepulchers whose inner corruptions he

did not see; and his moral wrath was kindled sometimes to a white heat at the contemplation of the hypocrisies and ghastly insincerities of the leaders of society. He knew all the meannesses of men, no one ever knew them so fully. But he never paraded them, nor mocked at them, nor took satisfaction in uncovering them. He looked upon the sins of the world with infinite sadness and pity. And even in that magnificent thunder-burst of his wrath, recorded in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, there is an undertone of eternal compassion. And it is something which we should never forget that that chapter, which in its central parts has all the majesty and fearfulness of a storm in the mountains, closes with one of the tenderest and most pitiful passages that ever fell from our Saviour's lips. For he had scarcely closed that awful invective of divine wrath upon the scribes and Pharisees with the words, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell!" than he broke out with a cry that has in it all the infinite pity of God—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under

her wings, and ye would not!" It is as we have sometimes seen the passing of some mighty storm, when the hills were rent and the foundations of the earth were shaken—and then, suddenly, the thunder died down to the softest music, the clouds lifted and rolled away, the earth was flooded with sunlight, every twig and leaf was hung with opalescent jewels, and a great and fragrant peace fell upon the world, and the birds came out of their coverts and began to sing.

Christ's Friendship

AND now, surely, we can see that Christ's deep and sympathetic knowledge of our thoughts and of our hearts makes possible a depth and range of friendship with him surpassing any friendship we may have with anyone else. They come into closest relations of friendship with us who enter most deeply and sympathetically into our thoughts and feelings. But we are made painfully conscious of the limitations of our human friends in this matter. We are made even more painfully conscious of our own limitations in this regard in relation to those whom we love most. How imperfectly at the best do we understand our best loved

friends! How impotently do we strive to touch hands with them sometimes in some of their deepest experiences! What enigmas they often are to us! What unexplored, and to us often impenetrable, regions do their natures often present! And, on the other hand, how sure we are that those who stand nearest to us often but imperfectly understand us, or wholly misunderstand us! We often strive in vain to make them comprehend our feelings, and we have a whole world of thought into which not even the nearest friend ever enters. There are a thousand ways of life which, so far as human companionship is concerned, we must walk alone. Our friends go so far with us, and then they stop because they can go no farther. They may not descend with us into some of the deepest shadows of sorrow and suffering, they may not walk with us in the hottest furnaces of our afflictions, and they may not climb with us to the heights of our best joys, they may not touch wings with us in the flights of our most triumphant hopes. For this is true, that human fellowship is confined to the middle ways of life: its heights and its depths are ways of solitude. And yet it is just in these exceptional and extreme ranges of our experiences that we most keenly crave fellowship.

It is when we go down into the depths of sorrow, and all the waves and the billows pass over us, that we most need some one to go with us; and in those most exalted moods of our lives, when our thoughts and our feelings transcend all the means we have of communication with our fellows, we would most delight in knowing that there is some one who understands what we cannot express, and enters into all the high raptures of our souls. Now, it is exactly this which Christ does. And he does this and can do it by virtue of the fact that he knows our thoughts. He walks with us through the whole range of our lives. There is no thought in us but he understands it perfectly; there is no unutterable wish but he interprets it fully; there is no undefined hungering and craving but he discerns it and sympathizes with it instantly; there is no throbbing undertone of suffering in our souls but his ear catches it and his heart responds to it in infinite compassion; there is no loneliness into which he cannot accompany us; there is no isolation from our fellows that can separate him from us; there are no ecstatic overtones of joy which he does not fully appreciate. He is the one being in all the universe who, in quick human sympathy en-

larged into divine ranges, can enter into all our experiences and understand all our thoughts. And so it comes to pass that we find in him a capacity for friendship greater than all human friendships, and a sympathy and a fellowship deeper and richer than that of father or mother, of brother or sister, of wife or children. Because he knows us as no one else knows us he comes to us with the offer of a friendship that surpasses that of all others.

JESUS lays the supreme emphasis on obedience. The wise are those who hear his words and do them. They are his friends who do whatsoever he commands them. Not those who make great professions, but those who do the will of the Father shall enter the kingdom of heaven. Not the son who at first promised to do his father's bidding, but failed to do it, is approved, but the one who at first refused but afterward went. The promise of the divine coming and indwelling is only to those who love him and keep his commandments. Obedience is the first, second, and third thing. The disobedient are lost; they can have no standing in the kingdom. And in this, also, Jesus

Jesus's Emphasis on Obedience

is our example as well as our teacher; our teacher because he is our example. He obeyed, therefore he is entitled to command obedience. We miss the moral greatness of Jesus if we fail to recognize this absolute surrender of himself to the divine will. His life was a conscious and voluntary fulfillment of the will of his Father. He kept himself always under authority. No conception of his divinity must be permitted to obscure this fact. He said early in his ministry, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me," and at the close of his life, while he prayed in Gethsemane, he said, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." That was why he was always able to interpret the mind of God, because he obeyed God. He spoke as he saw and heard; and he saw and heard the things of God because he did the will of God. Obedience is a necessary condition precedent to spiritual vision and understanding. A single act of disobedience on the part of Jesus would have spread a mist over his whole spiritual sky, and quenched the stars of truth. And there is no other way for anyone to come to a knowledge of truth, except by the way of obedience. He who obeys, and none other, shall know the doctrine. The man who will

not accept God's will shall not know God's truth.

THE strength, and poise, and fine spirit of Christ's character are revealed by the way he endured criticism. Final judgment concerning a man must wait until we have observed him under criticism. Criticism develops not so much the vices of character as its weakness. In his principles and conduct a man may be quite admirable and blameless; when suddenly and severely criticised he may show a spirit that will almost turn admiration into contempt. Criticisms frequently provoke resentment and irritation, which find expression in sharp retorts and indignant denunciations. Good people are often very sensitive to criticism, and do not hide their displeasure toward its authors. All this vexation and irritation are due to an overplus of self. Criticism disturbs our self-complacency. We take it ill that anyone should disapprove of our opinions or actions. We view the matter from the egoistic angle. We are tacitly assuming that we are right, and that we are praiseworthy instead of blameworthy. The critic rasps the

Christ's Spirit Under Criticism

nerve of our self-esteem, and assumes toward us superior wisdom or virtue. And that, in most people, provokes personal resentment, which proves that with most people egotism is the point of weakness. But that weakness never appeared in Christ. He was subjected to incessant criticism. He was constantly watched by his enemies. His motives were impugned, his actions were denounced, his teachings were contradicted, his claims were rejected. He was criticised for healing on the Sabbath, for the neglect of ceremonial washing before eating, for dining with publicans, for permitting "sinners" to touch him, for assuming authority to forgive sins, and for claiming to be the Messiah of whom the prophets had prophesied. He was misunderstood, misrepresented, maligned. But in no instance did he exhibit the slightest personal irritation or resentment. And yet he did not ignore his critics. He did not adopt the policy of contemptuous silence. He made great answer to those who criticised him in relation to the Sabbath. He showed how shallow and insincere were the protests of the ceremonial hand-washers. He wrought a miracle, requiring divine power, in proof of his divine authority to forgive sins. He justified his mission to

sinners, to the spiritually sick and lost. But how unruffled was his temper, how calm and perfectly poised was his spirit! He never spoke out of wounded personal pride, but always with reference to the truth. And so his defense was not a defense of himself but of the truth; and he loved his critics and desired to bring them to a knowledge of the truth.

Christ's Spirit Toward Sinners

HOW very difficult it is for us to catch the spirit of Jesus toward sinners—difficult, indeed, for us to understand what his spirit was. In the first place, there was in him no morbid, curious interest in sin. That kind of interest, in some degree, is in most people. Moral monstrosities have a sort of fascination for many minds. That gives drawing power to the "Chamber of Horrors," in which a show is made of crime and criminals. That is why people go "slumming" in the criminal districts of great cities. We are curious to look on moral abnormalities. There was nothing of that in Jesus. We cannot think of him looking upon the "seamy side of life" as a curious spectacle. In the next place, Jesus had no aversion for sinners, did not shrink from them. That disposition is

more difficult for us to overcome than a morbid curiosity in sin. We have a repugnance for sinners of the grosser types. We recoil from the touch of a murderer's hand, we experience a loathing for the morally vile that makes our flesh creep if we come in contact with them. There is no evidence that Jesus had any such feelings. He accepted invitations to dine with publicans and sinners, and sat down among them with perfect ease. A Pharisee's gorge would have risen at it. It was something that Pharisees could not understand in Jesus. They inferred that he was himself a sinner, else he could not have endured the company of sinners. Or, as in the case of the woman, in the house of Simon, who washed Christ's feet with her tears, they concluded that he did not know her character, and so could not be a prophet. But Jesus never recoiled from any sinner. He feared no contamination from the touch of any human being. There was this moral significance in the way he dealt with the physically diseased. Almost invariably he put forth his hand and touched those whom he healed, even though they were lepers, whom all men loathed and shunned. Bodily maladies, in Christ's sight, were always types of spiritual disease. How can we explain

this spirit of Christ? Only partially, perhaps, if at all. But he understood sin as we do not. He evidently did not view certain forms of sin as odious and loathsome and other forms as tolerable. Then his spirit toward sinners was always benevolent. Love drew him toward them. His mission in the world was to them. Disgust and repugnance and loathing would have driven him from them. He pitied sinners as he pitied sick folks; and pity and sympathy, not aversion and contempt, bring sinners to repentance. And Jesus had faith in the possibilities in sinners. Underneath what they were he saw what they were capable of becoming. The Pharisee saw in Magdalene the polluted woman; Jesus saw in her the lustrous saint.

Christ's Simplicity and Ease in Speech

WITH what amazing ease Jesus spoke, and with equal ease did he perform his great works! The second may seem to us more wonderful than the first, because we are more impressed by physical than by spiritual power; but in truth the first is the more surprising. We know enough people who are fluent and voluble, who speak without apparent effort—but their speech is shallow and inconsequential. Fluent wisdom is exceedingly

rare. But, indeed, fluency does not describe the speech of Jesus, for that seems to imply much and flowing speech. It was ease with Jesus rather than fluency. His speech did not run in an unbroken stream. He was not given to long discourse. What grows upon us is that he said such great things so briefly and simply. There was never any rhetorical straining. That always argues a paucity and weakness of thought that requires adventitious help or covering. It is open also to the suspicion of a certain insincerity. Jesus spoke only that he might utter truth, and his style had reference only to the best expression and impression of the truth, and never to exciting admiration for his rhetorical and oratorical powers. Simplicity and sincerity of motive produced simplicity and sincerity of style. And there is this unique peculiarity about the teachings of Jesus, that while they were almost invariably occasioned by local circumstances, they always had the dimensions and the permanence of universal truth. He moved among commonplaces of life, but the commonplace drew from him immortal speech that rises to the highest ranges of life. Great orators have required great occasions to kindle and inspire them to great utterances. But Jesus, with an audience of

one, at some ordinary hour, spoke greater things than the most geniused orators have ever uttered, though they spoke to thousands from most distinguished forums and at the crest-hours of history. Two things are indicated by this: first, the fullness of Christ's knowledge of truth, which gave to his teachings a divine *largesse*, even as a man of vast wealth is under no necessity of economy in his gifts or expenditures. And in the second place, it indicates that for Jesus human life had no commonplace. Life is commonplace and lacking in inspiration to us only because we see it so superficially. But in the light of his mission to it all life was great to Jesus, for he saw into its depths.

Jesus as Opportunity

SOME of Christ's parables, aside from the chief truths which they were intended directly to teach, contain by implication certain primary views which underlie his teachings. The parable of the sower is an instance. Two things seem to lie on the face of that parable. The first is the vital potency of truth. "The seed is the word." The harvest is an evolution of the grain. The truth represents the kingdom of God in involution. The sec-

ond thing is the hindering or helping influence which the moral conditions of a human life present to the operation of truth. The seed is a potentiality but not an *omnipotentiality*, if the latter word may be permitted. Its development depends upon conditions outside of itself. Its coming to fruition may be prevented by its being carried away, by a shallow and stony soil, by the choking influence of thorns. The gospel can transform a life, but it cannot do it unconditionally. In other words, the truth must be given a chance if it come to anything. Now, if we will look steadily for a while at these truths lying upon the surface of this parable, we will see back of them Christ himself in what was, perhaps, his most characteristic attitude and bearing. He stood and stands to the world for supreme opportunity. He never approached men in any other way than that. He was and is the great offerer, the great chancebringer. But he speaks in the subjunctive mood. "If" stands ever at the front of his gospel. As opportunity he knocks at the door—if any will open, he will come in, bearing spiritual wealth and power. As opportunity he came to the woman of Samaria. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee,

Give me to drink." As opportunity he came to the cities of Galilee—Capernaum, Bethsaida, Chorazin—but they let the opportunity that was in him pass. To Jerusalem he was unmeasured opportunity—all the golden dreams of the prophets might have been realized in her if she had only known the great hour of her visitation. For her failure to lay hold on the opportunity which he represented Jesus wept as he looked out over the Holy City, but he never passed from the offering to the forcing of opportunity. And such is still his attitude toward the world. To as many as receive him he conveys his grace of life. How great might cities and nations now be if they would only receive him! But he will never do more than offer himself to them. To what beauty and strength and surpassing achievements might men and women come, if they would only see and lay hold upon the possibilities which lie in him! The name of Jesus is but another word for Opportunity.

HOW did Jesus feel toward evil people? The parable of the tares gives us a clue that is worth following. In that parable they are called "the children of the

wicked one." It is significant that Jesus never speaks of "irreligious" people. It is also a suggestive comment on our conceptions that we are perpetually dividing people into two classes, the religious and the irreligious. That is a superficial and misleading distinction which Jesus never made. The Pharisees were extravagantly "religious," but they were at the same time, so Jesus declared, of their "father the devil." And we may be sure that he does not divide people into "communicants" and "non-communicants." His distinction was fundamental and was based upon character. There were the righteous and the unrighteous, those who were "the children of the kingdom" and those who were "children of the wicked one." That is like the distinction between the fig and the thistle. Now, toward the unrighteous the disposition of Jesus was never malevolent. In the parable the servants proposed to gather up the tares out of the wheat, but the master forbade them. The reason there given was lest the wheat also be injured. But in the fuller spiritual meaning of the parable it was also for the sake of the unrighteous themselves. Jesus is not disposed to destroy sinners. Even John, the beloved disciple, wished to have fire called down upon certain

Christ's Feelings Toward Evil People

offending Samaritans, but Jesus declared that he was come not to destroy but to save men's lives. The feeling of Jesus toward sinful people was benevolent. He was the "friend of publicans and sinners." But that was not because he did not look upon sin seriously. Nor, of course, was there any sympathy on his part with evil. Under it all was his belief that sin was curable, that wickedness was transformable, that tares might be changed into wheat. He does not say that in this parable, but, on the contrary, seems to imply that tares will continue to be tares forever. But a parable is not intended to teach everything. As a matter of fact, his mission is to tares—that is, to sinners. But taking the special angle of the parable, that though the tares may continue to the end among the wheat, it reveals Christ's faith in the survival of good in the world in spite of the evil mingled with it. We talk weakly sometimes as if evil were stronger than good. It is not. Jesus had the patience of God with sin because he knew it would come to an end at last. And there is matter for very deep reflection in his teaching in the parable of the tares that it would not be best for the righteous themselves that the wicked should be rooted out of the world.

Sin is to be eliminated not by violence, but by moral forces.

Jesus and Disordered Minds

THAT was a most piteous appeal which Macbeth made to the physician on behalf of Lady Macbeth, whose mind, through the operation of the remorseless moral laws which work inner retribution for sin, had left its orbit and was wandering among these shadows and haunting fears—"Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?" There is no aspect in which Jesus appears greater or more gracious than in his spirit toward such disordered minds. Whether we take the accounts of demoniacal possession to mean literally the inhabitation of a human soul by personal evil spirits, or to signify an insanity induced by immorality, Christ's attitude toward such wretched victims of vice is equally interesting. In the first place, in his dealing with such cases he is shown to be the master of the mind. That implies perfect knowledge of the mind. Our mental science at best looks only a little way into the mind. We soon come to processes which we cannot analyze and to depths which we cannot fathom. But the deranged mind perplexes us even more than the sane

and normal mind. We grow accustomed to the workings of the balanced and rational intellect, and can at least anticipate what many of its movements are likely to be under given conditions. But when anarchy prevails in the mental kingdom we can anticipate nothing because we cannot see how the inner mechanism has been thrown out of gear. The derangement probably lies in secret regions of the soul into which even in its normal state our science has been unable to penetrate. But Jesus evidently knew just what the nature and extent of the disorders were. The master of a great organ, when he hears a discordant note or observes any imperfection of tone, knows precisely where the causes lie and how to remove them. But even the greatest organ with all its complications of mechanism is crudely simple compared with the million-eyed and interminably intricate structure of the mind. But Jesus must have comprehended all the mazes and mysteries of the mind, else he would not have known how to apply the remedies to its disorders. Such knowledge is so supernatural that it makes it easy to believe in Christ's power to heal and restore to harmony the sin-produced anarchy of the mind. Indeed, knowledge and power are always commensu-

rate. Ignorance always marks the limits of ability. All things are possible to him that knows.

Christ's Spirit Toward the Depraved

BUT in what has just been said we have not revealed Christ's spirit toward those minds that have been usurped and deranged by the powers of evil. He knew them, to be sure, to the depths of their disordered souls. But how did he feel toward them? First of all, he was deeply and tenderly compassionate toward them. We find it exceedingly difficult to maintain respectful pity for the insane. We pity them, but the tendency is to mingle aversion and abhorrence with our pity. We can be very gentle and regardful toward a person with a weak or crippled body, but for one with a weak or crippled mind we often have contempt. They are uncanny and we shrink from their presence and touch. Jesus never manifested, and we may believe never felt, any such aversion. We are almost irresistibly disposed to shrink from persons who have brought infirmities of body or mind upon themselves by vice. It is like the feeling which most people have toward convicts wearing prison garb. Their touch seems contam-

inating. And if we know that insanity has been caused by vice, we find it hard to suppress our loathing. But Jesus was not less—it seems as if he were even more—pitiful in cases where sin was the cause of wretchedness. Very tender was his reply to the complaints of the externalists concerning the healing of a woman on the Sabbath. She had been bound of Satan, which implied that her infirmity was the result of sin. But his mission was to destroy the works of the devil. And not less tender was he with those whose infirmities were mental. But the most wonderful thing was that Jesus had faith in the outcome of even the most extreme cases of demoniac insanity. We can scarcely bring ourselves to expect anything of lunatics. If they are apparently restored, we still watch them with doubt. But Jesus had confidence in his power perfectly to cure the seemingly most helpless cases of madness. The faculties might be like "sweet bells jangled out of tune," but he knew the secret cause of their discord and was able to remove it. In all of the cases recorded we have no instance of insanity not due to moral causes. He may have dealt with cases in which no question of sin was involved. But he was seeking to show that he had faith in the possibility of the resto-

ration of the soul, not simply to perfect and stable intellectual equilibrium, but to permanent moral balance as well.

Silent Evidence of Christ's Regard for John the Baptist

THE death of John the Baptist raises the question of the personal feelings of Jesus toward his great advance messenger, and that raises the general question of the friendship of Jesus. Dismiss entirely Christ's official relations with John. Jesus knew perfectly who, in relation to his own coming and mission, John was. He was the great Messenger, seen by the prophets, who had been appointed to go before and prepare the way for his coming. Jesus recognized John's official mission fully. But official recognition tells us nothing of personal feeling. How did John stand in the friendship—that is, in the sympathy and admiration and affection—of Jesus? Did Jesus feel toward him as his close and personal friend? We must remember at the outset that the friendship of Jesus was never effusively expressed. His feelings never became torrential, his sentiments were always delicate, however deep and strong. The other John, he of the twelve, refers to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." But

there is no verbal expression of Christ's love for him more than for others. In the light of this self-designation by John we can see fine suggestions of such peculiar affection in several incidents, all the more significant because they are fine, rather than wordy, declarations of love. Common speech is too coarse to express the heart's richest sentiments. The soul has its own ethereal code, language without words, that holds the secrets of silence and symbols that only love's understanding can interpret. So we must not look for speech from Jesus concerning his love for his martyr-forerunner. Jesus did indeed eulogize John, but that had reference to his official character and work, and was intended chiefly for those who had rejected his message. But even if we had neither words nor suggestion, we could be sure that the heart of Jesus went strongly to John. Jesus must have felt the rugged nobility of John's character. John stood out simple and sublime in the consciousness of his high mission and in utter freedom from all worldliness. To his heart's center he was loyal to the One whose coming and kingdom he proclaimed; his honesty was clear and bracing as the mountain air, and his courage was that of a soul so true to truth and righteous-

ness as to require no effort to be brave. Of course Jesus loved a man like that. But how did he give proof of his love? We may easily overlook them, but there are three things which furnish the proof. The first was an act of high courtesy toward John, when Jesus withdrew from Judæa when the Baptist's disciples were growing jealous and his own popularity beginning to overshadow the fame of John. The second proof—and it is, perhaps, the greatest—was the fact that Jesus left John, without any direct aid or interference, to work out his mission and to go to the resultant martyrdom to which his appointed and accepted way led. That was the highest soldierly tribute to a brave and true man who could be trusted to fulfill his orders, and who would have scorned to escape suffering and death that lay in the path of duty. Very delicate, but very deep, was the third indication of Christ's love for John. When word was brought to him that John was dead there was no lamentation, no avowal of friendship, and no word of praise; but Matthew simply says, "When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart." To his disciples he said nothing of his sorrow, but they too were weary and heartsore, and he said, "Come

ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." We can read the meaning. The heart of Jesus was deeply and humanly touched by the death of John, and he sought to escape from the multitudes that he might have the healing and solace of the sea, and of silence and of the stars.

BUT this glimpse given us into the heart of Christ in relation to John the Baptist leads us, in fact, into the heart of his friendships for men now. We must think of Christ as a friend in the fullest and richest sense in which we know friendship in human relations. And that means more than that he is a patron or benefactor. One may be kind and sympathetic toward people whom he does not include in his list of friends. There must be mutuality in all complete friendship—mutual admiration, respect, confidence, love. Jesus calls no man his friend who does not represent in his character such elements as will command his admiration and affection; and only to such an one can Jesus be in the truest sense a friend. It is significant that Jesus did not say to his disciples, "I am your friend," but "Ye are my friends," and "I have

Basis of Friendship with Christ

called you friends." That is, he recognized and regarded them as his friends. That he in return was their friend did not need to be declared. In other words, we are Christ's friends only so far as we think of him, feel toward him, and act with reference to him as one worthy of our friendship; and he can be our friend only so far as we present to him the qualities that such an one as he must have in a friend. When Jesus said to his disciples, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you," he really announced a fundamental law of friendship. In the best and truest friendship there is harmony of will. There was nothing arbitrary in making obedience the test of friendship. It is not as if one man said to another, "You must do what I want you to do if you wish to be my friend." That might be the demand of selfishness, and that would make friendship impossible. And we recognize that principle in all our best friendships. One stands ready to do anything for a friend, to grant any request he may make. The point at which we sometimes err in relation to our friends is that we demand of them such things as a true friend should not demand. We command them unwisely and unjustly. Jesus never does that. His commands are reasonable and right, and

so represent such things as we, if we are the true friends of Christ, should do. To the extent to which we believe a friend is perfect, we joyfully conform to his will, for his will stands for the ideal. The ideal, in whomsoever it may be embodied, is of right our master. Disobedience to the ideal is a contradiction.

WE have advanced far enough in the study of the life of Christ to begin to feel the fact that he made no mistakes. The writers do not claim that. So far as anything they wrote indicates, they never directly considered that question. They recorded what they saw and heard. They evidently did not order their records with the intention of illustrating the perfect judgment and wisdom of Jesus. The impression of this does not come to us from any specific thing which they say. It grows upon us gradually as we read, and the marvel of it deepens the further we go. Jesus was placed in constantly varying situations; he came into contact and relations with a great variety of people. Some of those relations were most delicate. At the very outset there was John the Baptist, the rugged front-figure in the new movement—what attitude would

Christ Made no Mistakes

Jesus assume toward him? There was the problem of his own mother—what recognition or place should be given to her in the work upon which he was entering? And at once there arose large and complicated questions connected with great existing social institutions, the church and the state, which, to make the matter more complex, were bitterly hostile and antagonistic to each other. Then there was the woman of Samaria—even his disciples were surprised that he talked with her. That raised the whole question as to what his attitude should be toward the hated Samaritans, and how he should bear himself toward women. And he had always to reckon and deal with his enemies. What course should he pursue with regard to them? how treat and how answer them? There were questions of religious observance, such as the Sabbath and ceremonial washings, with respect to which custom and authority were very exacting. There were popular and deep-rooted prejudices, such as those directed against "publicans and sinners." There was the great task of instructing and training his own disciples, who were exceedingly crude and incapable of understanding much that he said and did. And at the last, in the tragedy of his trial and cruci-

fixion, he was subjected to tests of tremendous pressure and conflicting influences which made possible a score of mistakes. But no one has been able to indicate how he might have acted more wisely in any instance. I am not now speaking of sin, but simply of sound judgment and wisdom. How shall we account for this unique and marvelous fact, that Jesus never made any mistakes?

THE multiplication of the loaves and the fishes for the feeding of the five thousand is one of the very few miracles recorded by John in common with the three other evangelists. The reason is found in the teaching value of the miracle, of which Jesus made use the next day in Capernaum in his discourse on the bread of life, preserved by John alone (chapter 6). Deferring the deeper thought of that discourse for a moment, it gives a very interesting disclosure of one characteristic of Jesus—his unwillingness to tolerate a popularity based on misunderstanding. The miracles of the loaves and the fishes brought a long-growing popular enthusiasm concerning him to its culmination. The people purposed to take him, by force if necessary,

Dissipating Shallow Enthusiasm

and make him king. Jesus saw through it, and knew how ignorant and shallow the impulse was. He took no pleasure in such enthusiasm. It was false, and he determined to dissipate it by setting himself before the people in such a character that they would see how mistaken they were when they thought they wanted to make him their king. He could not be such a king as they were thinking about, and they would not have as their king such an one as he really was. He lost no time in making that mutual impossibility clear. Hence the heart-probing discussion that followed. They wanted a sort of commissary-king, one who would use his great powers always for their material and temporal benefit. For such a king they would huzza and make great acclaim. But he would have none of it. And we must remember that he will no more now than then countenance or accept any enthusiasm concerning him that misconceives his character and mission. And we still have very much of such shallow and ignorant enthusiasm. It requires but the touch of some practical test that brings the cross of Christ into sight to blow it away. Very often modern men are declaring they would make Christ their king while he could not accept the sort of throne they offer, and

they would instantly discrown him when they came to know the nature of the kingdom which he proposes. One of the saddest things in life is the disillusioning of people in their false conceptions of Jesus, and their refusing to follow him any longer whom yesterday they would have enthroned.

The Patience of Jesus

WE should study the patience of Jesus. Our first thought of it is likely to be incorrect. It was not an incapacity to resist or to be stirred to anger. What we call patience is sometimes chiefly temperamental torpidity. No nature was ever more finely strung and sensitive than that of Jesus. There was lightning in his eyes when he drove the money-makers out of the temple, and the thunder of judgment in his voice when he pronounced manifold woes upon the scribes and Pharisees; and he turned quickly upon Peter for his presumption with a sharp "Get thee behind me, Satan." The patient man is not the man necessarily who never strikes back nor answers back. He may do both, and sometimes should do both. Patience is an intelligent, deliberate virtue. It has its roots in the deepest soil of character, and is an expression,

as indeed every virtue is, of the whole character in one direction. The patience of Jesus was, for one thing, an expression of his faith. The impatient man who frets or flames on account of difficulties, or opposition, or disappointments, lacks settled confidence in God. His impatience implies fear of defeat. Jesus had always serene confidence that he would not fail. But his patience is most wonderfully illustrated in the way he bore himself toward the masses of the people. The instance of his feeding the five thousand is an example. Jesus and his disciples, after long and exhausting labors, and after the news of the death of John had saddened them, crossed over the Sea of Galilee that they might be in a desert place and rest awhile. But when their boat touched the shore they found themselves confronted by a multitude of tired and sick folk who had come on foot around the sea. Rest was impossible unless the appeals of the multitude were ignored. He was moved to compassion; for the multitude, whose spiritual needs were deeper than their physical, seemed to him like sheep without a shepherd, tired and lying down in sheer exhaustion and discouragement. The prospect of rest was dismissed, but Christ's patience sprang from his love. And that

marks the difference between moral and merely temperamental patience.

THE question, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" sets us thinking on the whole matter of Christ's concern about the views which were popularly held concerning him. Did he expect a better understanding? Did he consider it important to the success of his mission that the public should know who he was? And so, was he disappointed at the vagueness and incorrectness of the people's thought regarding him? It is evident that he was not moved to ask this question of his disciples for the purpose, primarily, of learning what the public thought concerning him was, but that it might open the way for drawing from the disciples an expression of their own thought. He was concerned that the disciples should know who he was, and we must believe that he was not indifferent about the popular thought, but it is evident that that was not a matter of chief concern with him. He had no expectation that he would be correctly understood by the multitude, or even by any considerable number of people. Such understanding required the dissipation of a

Christ's Estimate of Public Opinion of Him

whole system of misconceptions which had grown into the national thought. This could not be accomplished by the slight and occasional contact with the people possible to him. It was only partially accomplished in the twelve even after three years of intimate association and instruction. We find, indeed, that Jesus was very restrained in the announcement of his Messiahship, or certainly of his divinity, to the general public. He openly declared himself to the woman of Samaria as the Messiah, and to the man whose eyes he had opened as the Son of God. But in general he enjoined silence concerning such high claims. Such proclamations would have been misunderstood by the people, and they would have precipitated prematurely a crisis with the rulers. Such complete understanding of him on the part of the people was not necessary for the work which he had to do. We mistake if we suppose that the faith which he elicited was a theological faith that distinctly recognized and confessed the divinity of Jesus. Probably not one of all those whom he healed and pardoned had any adequate conception of the fact that he was the Son of God. If that had been necessary, but few could have obtained any help from him. He accepted, as complete, a faith

which was embryonic, because it was the best of which people were capable under the circumstances. And he was not concerned about proving his divinity. We take the richest value out of his miracles if we think of them as intended chiefly to demonstrate that Jesus was divine. The miracles could not prove that Jesus was the Son of God. That proof was of a higher order. That Jesus understood this is manifest in his answer to Peter's confession: "For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." In the following paragraph this inner evidence, which is necessary to any belief in Christ's divinity that is of any spiritual value, is discussed.

THE response of Jesus to Peter's confession of his Messiahship and divine Sonship has in it a meaning of permanent and universal instructiveness. That great secret is not revealed to any man by flesh and blood, but only by the Father. We do well to stop and look at this statement with care, for it will show us how Jesus expects us to come to a right conception of him. If anyone could come to know who Jesus is through

The Credo of the Heart

"the flesh"—that is, through purely natural means—Peter should have come to that knowledge. He had been with Jesus in continued and peculiar intimacy. The teachings of Jesus he had heard, and he had seen his most wonderful works. So far as visible and audible "evidences" were concerned, Peter had been given them in full. But Jesus clearly implies that the great confession of faith which Peter made did not spring out of those evidences. It came by a revelation made not to the natural eye and ear but through the inner senses of the soul. Peter in this stands for all men. And yet all the while we have been assuming that, somehow, we can "prove" that Jesus is the Son of God, and expecting that when we array our evidences before men they should confess to that belief. But the Great Secret does not lie in a syllogism. Logic is not a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. Paul shows us how inadequate are all our intellectual proofs when he says, "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit." That is putting into the form of a universal spiritual law what Jesus said concerning Peter's confession. And when John asks, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" we must understand the faith

referred to as being of the kind described by Paul. What estimate, therefore, does Jesus put on our labored systems of external evidences of his divinity? Much lower, it is to be suspected, than we have rated them. And may it not happen that a man may remain wholly unconvinced, by the evidences of logic, of the deity of Jesus who, nevertheless, may have such a spiritual apprehension of him as to say "in the Holy Ghost" that he is the Son of God? It is well if the intellect and the heart unite in their *Credo;* but we may be assured that though a man, speaking from his intellect, shall say, "I doubt," yet speaking from his heart shall say, "I believe," Jesus will accept the confession of his heart and patiently wait for the head to render its affirmation.

The Spirit of Forgiveness in Jesus

THERE was no sin against which Jesus more solemnly warned men than the refusal to forgive. An unforgiving man is lost. God's mercy cannot reach him. His sins must cling to him; even previously forgiven debts come back upon him. The unmerciful cannot obtain mercy. That is very stern doctrine, but it emphasizes not simply the vice of an unforgiving spirit but the virtue of

mercifulness. But here again the character and spirit of Jesus stand revealed in the light of his teachings concerning human duty. Human virtue is first and in the highest degree divine virtue. God certainly is all he requires men to be, and we may be sure that the soundings of the virtues of the divine nature are deeper than ours can possibly be. This means that Jesus has the spirit of infinite mercy in him. There is no debt so great that he is unwilling to cancel it. Sin cannot be repeated so often as to exhaust his patience and compassion. "Seventy times seven"—that is but a symbol of the unlimited. The thing for us to see is that Christ's own character requires this of him. Anything less than that would contradict Christ's sinless perfection, and make him inferior to some good men. God's virtue must not be limited. God simply *must be* willing to forgive unto the uttermost. And this is the growing impression which Jesus makes upon us. His heart hung breakingly and with infinite pity over the sins of the world. No malice was deep enough to extinguish his mercy. He forgave the sins of the most sinful with a joyous enthusiasm. And his soul of mercy rose above the storm of Calvary, above its horror of hate and mockery, praying for

those whose sin would seem most unpardonable. Does this mean license and encouragement to human sin? Does this mean that Christ will forgive all sins though million-multiplied and deep in quality of guilt? By no means. This is telling us only what Christ's disposition is, what it must be; it tells us nothing of the laws which make forgiveness possible. Christ will forgive anyone at any time in the long ages who will sincerely repent. To deny that would be to deny perfection to him. But that does not mean that a man will find himself able at any time after indefinite years of sin to turn again and repent.

Jesus the Good Samaritan of the World

JESUS is the Good Samaritan of the world. That is the great fact of the parable. Back of that wounded, robbed, and helpless man on the Jericho road over whom the tender-hearted stranger bent, stands the sublime but compassionate figure of the Man of Sorrows whose feet have traversed all the hard and dangerous roads of life, and who has bent and is bending over the victims of wrong everywhere, pouring in the oil of healing and binding up the bleeding wounds of pain in all lands. That parable stands for physical mis-

fortune and ministry to bodily sufferings. We are not entitled to refine it away into any spiritual equivalents. Jesus sympathizes with the victims of robbers, left bleeding and unconscious; with men crushed under fallen walls, in wrecked trains, in collapsed mines, under the cruel wheels of city streets. Where the man is found with his head lying in a pool of blood, where the crowd gathers about the street-boy trampled under the iron hoofs of horses, where some unknown workman has been shattered by an explosion of dynamite, where the fireman goes down among flames and falling walls, Jesus Christ, the Samaritan of Humanity, stands with tender hands, with oil, and bandages, and lint, and open purse. Does some one doubt, and say, "Where was he yesterday in the gorge when the train broke through the bridge? And where was he the day before when a workman fell from his scaffold and was carried out with crushed shoulder and broken limbs?" Did you read of the haste with which physicians and surgeons came to that wreck? Of the way homes were opened to the sufferers? Of the overflow of pity that kept back nothing needed to alleviate pain? Did you follow the broken workman as he was borne in the gentle ambulance to

the Christian hospital, and stand by while the surgeon and pitying nurse bound up his wounds and kept watch over him for days and weeks? And still do you ask, "Where was the Christ-Samaritan?"

IN no aspect of his ministry does Jesus more emphasize principles in the religious life as distinguished from precepts than in his dealings with the Sabbath question. The preceptualist is always the bigot and intolerant. For he is always the externalist, and is forever laying the stress upon secondary and non-essential matters. And it is always comparatively easy to fulfill a precept, and the preceptualist, consequently, is very certain to develop a false sense of his own righteousness, and that results in moral pride and a passion for praise and recognition from men. Moreover, precepts are chiefly negative, and nothing is easier to develop self-applause than a strict observance of a list of external acts not to be done. It was a very slight task not to do a score of things on the Sabbath day, but the catalogue of negatives made a great show of virtue. But that kind of thing took all the high meaning out of the Sabbath. It made it

Jesus and the Law of the Sabbath

a little affair of technicalities instead of a great institution relating to the higher life of humanity. Jesus took his stand on the principles of the Sabbath, and utterly ignored the accumulation of provincial precepts that had gathered about it. External Sabbath observance must not be permitted to stand in the way of the universal laws of duty and benevolence. It was a moral contradiction that the sanctity of any day could be such as to forbid the doing of good, the showing of kindness to the unfortunate. The Sabbath was made for man, and any rules devised for its observance that interfere with this great intent must be without warrant and false. So we see Jesus following principles and letting precepts take care of themselves. If the precepts clashed with the principles, so much the worse for the precepts. And, consequently, there was outlook of great breadth to Christ's religious vision; there was the movement of perfect liberty in his conduct. We greatly need to view Jesus in this aspect now, for we have made our own big catalogues of little precepts and adopted a good many of them into our church laws, and we are still much disposed to measure our virtues by the things of our own defining which we do not do. One full day's journey with Jesus on the up-

lands of principles should cure us of our narrow zeal for the preceptual.

The Magisterial Christ

WHEN we have reached a point a little beyond midway in the life of Jesus we are made aware of a new quality in his spirit. A new tone comes into his voice, the tone of sternness. He begins to assume the office of judge, and his speech becomes magisterial. We cannot doubt that a new expression came into his face as his voice took on this altered tone; that his features hardened warningly, and his eyes emitted glints of solemn wrath. When we become aware of this new quality in him we stop, chilled rather than thrilled. What does it mean? Have the gentleness and tenderness of Jesus failed him? Are the resentment and bitterness, which are so often engendered in the hearts of men by opposition and disappointment, developing in his heart, and will he now turn in denunciation upon those whose following he has failed to secure? We are conscious that we have come to a point where a severe test is being applied to the character of Jesus. This magisterial tone and spirit of threatening must be shown to have no kinship with petty, wounded pride

or the irritation of personal disappointment, or Jesus must appear less admirable than in the preceding part of his ministry. From this point he must seem greater or less than before. But when we have been with him long enough in this altered mood we know its meaning; we recognize that his sternness was the natural and only proper response to the moral conditions which he faced. The hardening of his countenance and the flash of his eyes were the answer which, at a given point in moral turpitude and contumacy, God gives to all who sin against and reject the truth. They may not see it clearly, for when men have reached the point of settled and deliberate resistance of truth their eyes are blinded; but God still flashes his sword in the faces of obdurate sinners, warning them that they have come close to that hidden line between "God's mercy and his wrath." Listen to Jesus from this point as he begins to say, "Ye hypocrites," and to speak his great parables of judgment, and it must be felt that he spoke not for himself but for the government of God, and that his voice was the same as that which spoke out of the clouds and fires of Sinai. Jesus was stern, as God at last, by the necessities of his own nature, must be stern.

THE response of Jesus to the Pharisees, who came to him with the word that if he did not depart quickly Herod would kill him, reveals to us the dignity and high self-respect of the Master. Jesus knew Herod for the wicked weakling that he was. He knew under what shameful circumstances he had murdered John the Baptist. Now this leprous, lecherous kinglet sends word to Jesus that unless he makes haste to leave the land he will kill him also, as he had killed John. What answer could Jesus give to such word from such a man? Herod was the only man for whom Jesus seemed to feel contempt. Herod was utterly contemptible; how could Jesus do other than regard him with contempt? Later on, when Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, and the shallow débauché thought to have diversion in seeing his prisoner perform some miracles at his bidding, Jesus gave him the contempt of silence. But in the first instance, when Herod threatened him and thought to make him flee, there was high self-respect and dignity, mingled with contempt, in the response which he made. Jesus flee from Herod? He who held the calm mastery of his fate until his work should be completed be turned from the highway of his purpose by such a driveling coward and puppet

Christ's Contempt for Herod

as this royal roué? "To-day, and to-morrow and the third day"—work to be carried on, and the goal of the ages to be reached—tell that "fox" that the stars in their courses would sooner turn aside at the challenge of a creeping insect than the Son of man at his threat. The Pharisees who were bidden to bear answer to Herod must have felt that somehow the situation had become reversed, and that they had come *to* a king, not *from* one; and, had they been capable of sensing the quality of his greatness, they would have recognized in Jesus a royal dignity and serene authority in comparison with which even the imperial Augustus, master of the truculent and trembling Herod, shrank to pigmy littleness.

Jesus Dealing with Cant

CANT always rang dull on the table of Jesus's understanding, never passing for genuine coin. Jesus never left the "canter" to suppose that his cant had passed undetected. Perhaps, however, this does not quite state the case. The indulger in cant is in most cases unaware that he is a "canter." It is not in his case a deliberate, conscious matter of hypocrisy, but results from a habit long in forming, of saying what appears

to be the proper and pious thing to say, though there may be no genuine self-expression in the saying. That is a very insidious vice that creeps in unaware upon many people, and dries up the sap of their spiritual natures and leaves them fancying they are alive while, in fact, they are dead. But Jesus knew the man of cant, and usually brought a test to bear upon him that was calculated to show him that his speech was a sham. Such a case was that of the man who was among the guests at the table of a certain Pharisee, where Jesus was present, and heard his searching words against those who sought on such occasions the most honorable places; and his counsel that not the rich or the circle of special friends and kindred should be invited to the dinners or suppers given, but the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind. We can easily conceive that an embarrassed silence fell on the company that listened to that speech of Jesus which they were so morally incapable of understanding. But this particular man felt that something ought to be said, and that it would be the proper thing to interject a pious exclamation; and so he lugubriously and probably with a solemn upward roll of the eyes exclaimed, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the king-

dom of God!" Now, the sentiment he expressed was a very good one; the difficulty was that it was a smooth-worn platitude and was not the real sentiment of the man who uttered it. The man intended that it should express his own deep desire to sit down at the table of the kingdom. Probably he thought that he had that desire. But he didn't; and Jesus set about showing him and his fellow Pharisees that they were unwilling to eat the bread of the kingdom by giving the parable of the great supper, from the going to which all those who were invited asked to be excused. The cant was punctured. And Jesus, we may be sure, is still listening to our speech; and our words, if not genuine expressions of our hearts, will fall with the thud of lead instead of the clear ring of silver. He listens while we repeat the phrases that once expressed vital spiritual experience but which have come to be convenient and easy forms or representations of the things we may think we ought rather than the things we do really experience.

HOW absolutely free from cant—the insidious vice just referred to—was Jesus! Of course this is implied in the general declaration of his sinlessness; but so general a proposition as that presents no particular aspects. The absence of cant does give us an inlook into the spirit of Christ that reveals the quality of his character as few other angles of observation do. But, first of all, we should look over his life and assure ourselves of the fact that he never in the slightest degree fell into cant. He employed no traditional phrases. We never have the slightest feeling that he uttered any borrowed sentiment, or spoke dead words—that is, words that once had life but out of which the soul of meaning has gone. His speech, therefore, was real utterance, expression, revelation, not mere echo. There is but one prevention or cure for cant, namely, genuineness. A man not sound clear through who attempts the religious life, will inevitably fall into cant in proportion to his unsoundness. His very professions of frankness and honesty will become cant; for the man who is always declaring that he speaks just what he thinks is often a "canter" of the worst kind. The genuine man will be honest in his speech as necessarily as

Christ's Freedom from Cant

he will be honest in his business. He will no more issue spurious words than he would issue counterfeit coin. Cant is the unavoidable aberration of a character not perfectly pivoted in truth. It is not a thing to be directly governed by the will, for it is an effect which can only be reached by changing the condition out of which it proceeds. When that condition is remedied then cant is impossible, and the simplicity and sincerity which are its opposites are easy because perfectly natural. The utter absence of cant in Christ, therefore, is deep indication of his moral perfection. A partially unsound character may not avoid the vice of cant, because its spirit is so subtle that it eludes voluntary control. Its absence, consequently, more, perhaps, than anything else, shows that the deepest springs of character are pure.

IS it venturing upon ground too sacred and delicate to look in upon the emotional life of Jesus? Not if we may do so reverently and sympathetically, and not with a prying curiosity that seeks to gaze upon that which belonged to the region of holy privacy in his life, and which does not properly belong

to us. In his heart, as in every heart, there was a closed chamber that should be held inviolable and exempt from intrusion, to knock at the door of which should be considered a rude impertinence. But short of that inner, silent cloister of his soul, before which we can only stand with closed eyes and fingers upon our lips, everything connected with Jesus is proper matter for our inquiry. We desire to know him, we need to know him, as deeply as possible. And when we study him on the emotional side of his nature the first thing that impresses us is that he was full furnished with all the springs and capacities for emotion. There was nothing of cold impassivity in him. Beauty evidently thrilled him, for he talked of the surpassing beauty of the lilies; the mountains put their spell of power and majesty upon him, for he so often went up alone among them for meditation and prayer; the sea charmed him, for he delighted to frequent its shores; virtue excited his admiration, hypocrisy his scorn, and faith his praise; sickness and misfortune and poverty and hunger moved him to compassion, and the sore sorrow of his friends and the impending doom of his enemies moved him to tears. He felt the chill of the social discourtesy of Simon, the Phar-

The Emotional Life of Jesus

isee, and his heart warmed mercifully toward the repentant and loving Magdalene. In the presence of the baseness and falseness and greed of men he was stirred to glowing moral wrath, but he overflowed with tenderness toward little children. After he began distinctly to speak of his approaching death we realize that his feelings ran at too great depths for our understanding. The disciples felt the mysterious influence of the growing death-passion that filled his heart, but they feared to question him, so awesome were his looks. His soul was sublimated by great emotions as he kept the passover on the night of his betrayal, and we, even as his amazed followers, cannot understand his deadly agony in the garden. The nature of Jesus was thoroughly alive, sensitive, quick, tensely and delicately keyed in all its sensibilities. And yet he was so perfectly poised in his spirit that his emotions never disturbed the center of gravity of his soul, and there was never any disproportion between his feelings and the facts which awakened them, neither more nor less, and he was always the master of his emotions as he was the master of his thoughts. His emotions never sounded any false or discordant note, because every spirit-nerve of his nature was keyed to truth.

TOO much has been made of the remark by somebody that it is twice recorded that Jesus wept, but not once that he ever smiled. Unfortunately, many people have been influenced by that remark to think that Jesus may never have smiled. His mission was so serious, we are told, and the burden he carried upon his heart was so heavy, that he had no impulse to smile. That does not exalt but lowers our conception of Jesus. A life without a smile is a very imperfect life. We are sympathetic and pitiful toward crushed and heart-broken people who have passed into the permanent eclipse of sorrow, and whose eyes never fill with the light of joy, and whose lips never break into the music of laughter. We pity and excuse them, but we do not make the mistake of thinking that they represent life's highest ideal. Why, then, think of Jesus shrouded with gloom? We are too much disposed to think of him, in his incarnation, as burdened and afflicted with the consciousness of his humiliation. That is to think unworthily of God. When the Son of God undertook the redemption of the world by taking on him the nature of man he did it joyfully, not dejectedly and gloomily. His mission was serious and his burden was great; but do we not

Did Jesus Smile or Laugh?

know that the men who have had the hardest tasks, and who have stood under the world's heaviest loads, have been men of good cheer and glad hearts? The spirit out of which smiles and laughter spring is most important to the very people who fight hardest and suffer most. Was Jesus weaker than scores of the great men of history that he could not carry his burdens and be cheerful? He came into the world to do such a work as none other could have done; but his strength was sufficient for it, and he showed us how the joy of the Lord may be the strength of the mightiest. Jesus smiled. In the long journeys with his disciples we may believe his conversation with them was sometimes broken by laughter soft and clear as music. And can we think of him without a smile upon his lips or with face unillumined with joy, when he took little children in his arms and blessed them? Such a thought of Christ in his life in the flesh contradicts the revelation of him given in the lives of men and women now. He who is the inspiration of the world's deepest and sweetest joy, that breaks like sunshine and the music of fountains in perpetual smiles and laughter and songs, cannot himself have been sad and joyless.

THE great portrait painters and the portrait sculptors must be the interpreters of those whose likenesses they put on the canvas or chisel in marble. The outward likeness must reveal the inner likeness. Photography does this very poorly indeed. Fidelity in physiognomy and anatomical exactness are not enough to constitute a true portrait. The effort of the sculptor described in Hawthorne's Marble Faun to produce a satisfactory model in clay for a bust of Donatello will be recalled. An indefinable something in the face of his subject forever eluded him. The artist must catch the fleeting mood, the sudden flashings of the soul, the passing lights and shadows of thought and feelings. Somehow he must be able to get back of the face he paints to the soul that looks out of the eyes and manifests itself in all the mobile features and ever-changing expressions. One sitting or a hundred sittings are not enough to enable a true artist to put into his portrait of a man all which he feels should go into it. The complete portrait must be a composite of the expressions and moods and passions of the man seen under a thousand different circumstances; for no man expresses the whole of himself at any one time. This is why, without doubt, the

John's Portrait of Jesus

great painters have so frequently chosen to paint their own portraits. The visitor to the Uffizi Gallery at Florence will remember the section in which the portraits of the great masters painted by themselves are hung. Looking into the faces gazing down upon us from those canvases, we feel that we are studying the efforts at self-revelation which those men of genius made. It was not egotism, much less conceit, which moved them to portray themselves; rather, it was the conviction that they alone knew themselves, and so should be able to give an adequate representation not simply of their outward features but of their essential being. Now, John, the beloved disciple, has given us the supreme portrait of Jesus, simply because more than anyone else he understood who and what Jesus was. His is the interpretative Gospel. Viewed simply as a history it is very incomplete and inadequate. In his drawing he had the background of history which others had furnished. His task was not, primarily, to write history but to interpret Him who was the subject of history more fully and deeply than all the facts recorded concerning him. The facts which he recorded were chosen for their value in the uses of interpretation. He introduces Christ

to us under the title of "the Word," the Revealer. In the writing of his Gospel John was the revealer of the Revealer. It is in the highest sense the Gospel of manifestation. Writing his Gospel in his old age, after Christ for so many years had been living in the deepest depths of his own life and the lives of multitudes of believers, he painted the portrait of the Master not simply as he saw him during the three brief years of his immediate discipleship, but as he saw him in the light of his own spiritual consciousness. He knew the mind of Christ. Like Paul, the life which he lived he lived by faith of the Son of God. He viewed the teachings of Christ through the eyes of Christ himself. Consequently, the colors with which he painted the great portrait were mixed on the palette of his inmost heart, and his picture will be understood only by those who view it with eyes spiritually cleared.

JOHN'S Christ was divine. His Gospel must be discredited if the doctrine of the absolute deity of Christ is to be rejected. He puts this doctrine at the very forefront of his history and interpretation. The first view which he gives us of Christ has for its background his preëxistent and eternal life of union with God. In this he is distinguished from the other three evangelists. Mark, the oldest of the Gospels, begins directly with the ministry of Jesus, making no reference to his birth and youth, much less to his existence before his human birth. Matthew and Luke describe the circumstances connected with his birth and his childhood, the angelic annunciation, the divine conception, the shepherd's vision of angels, the guiding star, and the worshiping Magi. These settings in which the beginning of his life is placed are beautiful and fitting and satisfying to the imagination and the sentiments of faith. But these settings are like mere foothills as compared with the sublime conception unveiled in the Prologue to John's Gospel, which rises above them like a mighty peak—the unfolding vision of the everlasting Word, who was with God and who was God, and who from the beginning of the dateless existence of deity was the creative power

The Outlook of the Prologue of John's Gospel

by which all things were made. John makes no direct reference to the birth of Christ; but such reference would have been superfluous and unfitting in view of the exalted backlying facts over against which he set the earthly life of our Lord. He put the whole mystery of the incarnation in the short but tremendous statement, "The Word became flesh." It is clear that his view of the preëxistent Christ was reached by a deep reflective process. It must not be regarded, however, as something merely evolved from John's own mind without any warrant in the teachings of Jesus himself. But it is significant that the words of Jesus which chiefly imply this conception of his glorious preëxistence are recorded only by John. It is he alone who reports to us that Jesus at one time said to the Jews, "Before Abraham was, I am." And he alone gives us Christ's great and final prayer, in which, having the vision before him of the eternal life from which he came into the life of the flesh, he prayed: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." No lower conception of Christ's divinity, which would regard him as divine merely in the sense that he was a superhuman being of a high

order but finite, can be harmonized with the representations of him given in John's Gospel. This Gospel must be studied and interpreted on the high level of the Prologue. Considered on that level, its teachings are clear; approached on any other theory than this highest conception of the nature of Christ, it involves us in hopeless confusion. The absolute deity of Jesus is the only key that will unlock for us its divine wealth of truth.

The Light of Life

JOHN declares that in Christ was and still is the source of life. Life proceeded from him. Even in its lowest forms of animal and vegetable vitality it is an impartation from him. But particularly all spiritual life has its origin in him. Man is a living soul because Christ the Creator imparted his own highest life to him. And this life given to them in creation is "the light of men." Because they have a life in them higher than that of vegetable or animal, even the life of spirit, they have spiritual consciousness, and consciousness is light. A dog has light up to the range of the kind of life that is in him. But that life, and so its light or consciousness, is not that of the spirit. It is of light in this

inner fundamental sense that John is here speaking. It is spiritual consciousness, a spiritual awareness, that comes by virtue of being a spirit of the same essence as He who created him. This tells in what sense the Word is "the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Every man is born with the life of God in him, and so with the light of God in him. And that light fails when and to the extent to which the life fails. This is a primary truth that runs all through John's Gospel, and is fundamental to Christianity. The order cannot be changed. It is light through life, never life through light. That is, men may not be illuminated or instructed into life, but the life that is in them must be developed into knowledge. John the Baptist was a lamp, not the sun; he was a reflector, not a self-luminous body. Jesus said of John (5. 35), "He was a burning and a shining light." But Jesus was "the light of the world," the source of all lights. The two Greek words used express this difference. When Christ is called "the Light," the word used is *phos,* which is light or luminosity in the most primary sense. But when John is called "a light," the word is *luchnos,* which means lamp or candle. John was a great lamp—but what a little thing is

that compared with the sun! And the greatest human genius has never gone beyond that. We measure them by the scale of candle power. But who has measured the candle power of the sun?

THE seal of high destiny had been put upon John the Baptist at his birth. He was "sent from God" and, without doubt, a deep and mysterious sense of some great calling had been on his heart from youth. And at last, when he had come to full years, the Voice that had so long been speaking as a hidden oracle in his heart, grew definite, and urgent, and articulate, and he found himself crying out what he could no longer refrain from uttering. Yet it is evident that to John's own mind in the early days of his ministry there was a mystery attaching to his mission. Something must appear to illumine his own thought and enable him to see his way clearly. Gradually it was made known to him not only that the kingdom of God was at hand but the King himself. And there came to him the revelation of the way in which he should know the King when he should appear. "He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto

Life's Meaning is in Christ

me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." For that sign he had waited with eagerness; and at last it had been given, when following his baptism he had seen the heavens opened and the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove descending upon Jesus, and a voice out of heaven testified that he was the Son of God. Then for the first time John knew the meaning of his own life; then the nature of his mission became clear; then he understood the deep and painful yet exultant stirrings of his spirit during the preceding years. He knew himself when he came to know what his relations were to Christ. And the mists hang over every man's life and its meaning and mission must forever be obscure until the vision of Christ comes and the life finds its explanation in its relation to him. Christ is the key to a man's own destiny.

THOSE two men who followed Jesus really did not know definitely what they sought. It was not necessary that they should. It was enough that they were following the impulse of the best that

was in them. The main thing was that they were seekers. They were following the latest and best clue of truth that had come to them. They did not know where nor to what it would lead them, but they were sure it led somewhere and to somewhat. What they actually found surpassed all they had conceived in advance. The spirit of a quest may be vague. Sufficient if it pushes the soul out, for God is never far from a seeking soul. In due time there will be revealed to such a soul the object of its search, and it will exclaim, "This was what I sought though I knew it not." Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night, was another man who did not know precisely what he was seeking, but whose obscure longings led him in the right direction. All truth-seeking is likely to be vague at first, and the discoveries are sure to be greater than the advance conception. The disciples said, "We have found." So Andrew said to his brother Simon; so Philip said to Nathanael. And so it seemed to them, and so in a secondary sense it was. But if they had understood a little more deeply, they would have said, "The Messiah has found us." The process of the divine seeking is usually hidden, and the human quest appears to be the chief thing. God ap-

The Double Seeking and Finding

pears to us at last, and we cry out, "We have found him whom we sought." But it is really God finding us. Jesus came down there to the Jordan from his temptation in the wilderness for the express purpose of meeting these men. He intimated that foresight and purpose to Nathanael. "Whence knowest thou me?" Nathanael asked in wonder. And Jesus replied, "Before that Philip called thee." And so it had been with others—John and Andrew and Simon and Philip. Before they had heard of him he knew them. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you," he said to them later. It is important and encouraging for us to keep this in mind, that Christ is seeking us, and in every new experience, every clearer revelation of truth and duty, is finding us. We may say that we are finding him; but that is because he puts himself in our way. And it should strengthen us as we go to tell others of him, that before we reach them Christ has seen them, even as he saw Nathanael before the coming of Philip.

The Choosing of Twelve Kings

TO the world at the time the selection of his special disciples by Jesus was a matter of utter indifference, seeming, so far as known at all, a very trivial thing; but as a matter of fact that selection was of the utmost importance to all the coming ages. The crowning of no twelve kings compares in interest to the calling of the twelve apostles. Jesus was guided by certain definite principles in his selections; what those principles were we may only infer by what he did. Why he chose just twelve men we cannot say. The theory that they were to represent the twelve tribes of Israel seems mechanical. There is no magic or moral value in particular numbers. We can see, however, good reason for making the number limited. Success would depend upon the training of a few rather than upon the enlistment of many. They were not perfect men, for the sufficient reason that there were no such men. Jesus was come to introduce his gospel among men as they were. It was to transform and save imperfect and sinful men to be the bearers of the gospel to men like themselves. There was no original halo about the heads of those chosen twelve. The record makes it very clear that they were full-stocked with human infirmities. Our idealization of

them must have reference to what they may have become ultimately rather than what they were at the beginning and during the process of their training. But one thing we know; they were men of great capacities. The seed of the kingdom to be planted in their minds and hearts would require great depth and richness of soil. They were capable of greatness and perfection. Every soul, even the pigmiest, may grow great, given a few thousand years of the unlimited opportunity of eternity; but Jesus required men who could rise to the level of a great work in the immediate future. His way of calling these men has increasing interest. He sought them, but so naturally that they were made to feel that they sought him. And, indeed, they did, and their finding him broke upon them with the surprise of a great discovery. But back of their seeking and finding was his seeking, as is still the case with all men. But there was no compulsion in their call. They were not chosen irresistibly; they rose and followed him because they willed it. We are not sure that the invitation did not come to some who rejected it. That great invitation was apparently in the summons Jesus gave to the rich young ruler, upon which he turned his back sorrowfully because of his

love of riches, not knowing he was casting away an honor for which the highest angels might have contended. Of the dark enigma represented by Judas we will speak in connection with his deep apostasy and fearful ending; for the present it is enough to say that he was sincerely called and had equal chance with the others to gain eternal honor. He accepted that chance for awhile and then threw it madly away. Jesus only understood all to which he was calling his disciples. There must have been a deep sadness and pity often in his eyes as he looked upon them, for he saw poverty and the imprisonments and scourgings and deaths awaiting them; but he also saw the eternal weight of glory in reservation for them.

Christ and His Forerunner

JOHN the Baptist and Jesus—their names are inseparably connected. What were the conscious relations between them, and what were their inner attitude and feeling toward each other? There were some striking correspondences in their lives. The great angel Gabriel came to announce their births, and the lifework of each was charted in advance. This latter fact must be understood in

the study of each of them alike. John was divinely sent and commissioned, as Jesus was. Paul's words, "God sent forth his Son," set the life of Jesus in the light of a sublime purpose, but the words, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John," give equally divine meaning to the life of the stern preacher of the wilderness. There was no uncertainty or wavering in the mind of Jesus or John concerning his business in the world. Each felt he had a work which he must finish, and neither of them could be diverted from his task. There was much unwritten history in both cases. We must take large account of the home life in each case. Mary and Elisabeth each bore in her heart a sacred secret concerning her heaven-given son, and we may be sure that the atmosphere which those heart-secrets created deeply influenced and directed the education of the two children whose subsequent lives were destined to be so importantly related. Between Mary and Elisabeth there were without doubt, during those three months when they lived together in the Hebron home, exchanges of holy confidences. What thoughts of each other may have been imparted to John and Jesus by their mothers, who must have felt rather than known that their sons

were to be mysteriously united in some great work? The character of the bringing up of John was indicated by the angel who announced his birth (Luke 1. 15). He was to be a Nazarite. We must take this fact of the difference in the early training of John and Jesus into account in considering their relations in manhood. John was brought up alone, with the ideals of an ascetic; Jesus grew up in the atmosphere of a simple home, in association with other children, in the exercise of all natural human sympathies. The effect was very apparent in the spirit of the men who went out from those homes. Everything indicates that John and Jesus had never met until that day when Jesus presented himself at the Jordan for baptism. But the mind of John, it may have been for many years, was filled with the thought of Jesus. All the field of the future was occupied by the figure of that mysteriously Great One, in whose coming John felt lay all the meaning of his own life. His thought of Jesus was derived from a higher source than mere parental intimations. When the great passion of his mission came upon him he waited with burning impatience for the coming of him concerning whom the voice in the deepest oracle of his heart had been so

long speaking. There is a passionate thrill in his words, twice repeated, "I knew him not, I knew him not," but the secrets of God's revelations to him follow these words in his expressions of his confidence in the certainty of the coming of the expected One, and the token given him by which he might certainly know him when he came. And there is exultant joy in his testimony, "And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." After the baptism, why was not John drawn directly into Christ's service? John lacked the qualities that would have fitted him to be an apostle. He was the herald of the kingdom, but could not enter into its joy. He belonged to the olden time—greatest of all, but he belonged to the old. Its great dreams, its spirit of austerity, its stern ideals of righteousness, and the throbbing hopes of its prophecies, were all embodied in him. But no affectionate intimacy was possible between Jesus and John. Their lives touched deeply and then separated. There is a great pathos in the sad necessity that was upon them to hold on in separate loneliness on their appointed ways. For John were awaiting Herod's prison and headsman; for Jesus was awaiting Pilate's cross.

Christ's Method in Selecting His Disciples

WE cannot too carefully study Christ's methods in gaining disciples. The twelve men who became his closest followers, and whom he called apostles, were first of all dealt with as all others. Their discipleship came first; their apostleship was a separate matter. His way of attracting and attaching them to himself must, therefore, not be regarded as exceptional. The first thing which strikes us is the extreme simplicity of his methods. He proceeded, indeed, so simply and naturally that we are not made aware that he was really employing any method at all. But we come to know that the natural is always governed by definite principles. Nature does not advertise her methods, but she has them, and always works according to them. The fascination in the study of nature chiefly lies in the surprise of the discovery of the deeply hidden plan which underlies all of her simplicity. We find this same fascination in the study of Christ's way of dealing with men. He made no mistakes, even as nature makes no mistakes; for a mistake consists in the misapprehension of the facts in a given case, or the misapplication of means to the desired end. He not only knew men, but he knew each individual man. He was always true to the

laws of universal human nature, but he was also true to the most minute peculiarities of each person. Unlike many of us, consequently, he not only never spoke an untrue word, but, what is more exceptional, he never spoke a true word at the wrong time or under the wrong circumstances. His method was, therefore, personal. He took people as he found them, and he found in their peculiar personal qualities and circumstances the most effective points of contact and the lines of least resistance in securing their attention and interest and gaining access to their hearts. We must always keep in mind the object which Jesus was aiming at. He had no conception of discipleship which did not involve the moral transformation of men and women. He did not desire anyone to enlist as a formal follower of him who was not brought into spiritual harmony with himself. If he had been willing to accept such enlistments, he could easily have secured a large following. But that kind of success would have been failure; and that kind of success, though it is the most difficult lesson for the church to learn, is still lamentable failure. Jesus so presented himself to each person as to be seen to represent the fullest answer to the deepest need of the soul.

Men saw in him what their hearts had been consciously or unconsciously crying out after. No one really ever chooses Christ until he so sees him. The impulse to go to him and follow him springs out of the depths of life. The faith which claims him and lays hold upon him is the act of the soul for its own self-preservation. Jesus must be seen to be not simply desirable but a necessity. Just what that necessity is, as any particular man sees it, we cannot tell in advance. But Jesus understood that central secret of every life and addressed himself to it and adjusted himself to its demands. The hunger in the Magdalene's heart which drew her to Jesus was not just the same as that in the heart of Mary of Bethany, but to both of them alike he was complete satisfaction. The Christ whom Peter saw and loved differed from the Christ whom John saw and clave to, but to both of them alike he was the answer to the deepest cravings of their souls. Somehow Jesus succeeded in presenting himself to men as the embodiment of their most exalted ideals, as the vision of their fairest dreams.

WE can only imperfectly conceive the nature of the problem which Jesus faced when he entered upon his work. He never made any formal announcement of his purposes or any kind of statement of his plans. In his mind there was no uncertainty, and we gather from his incidental statements that he was conscious that he was in the world to carry forward and complete a work given him by his Father, and that the aim of that work was the saving of men from sin by imparting to them spiritual life, and that the result was to be the establishment of the kingdom of God in the earth. His task was to be a world-task. His mission was not a national but a universal one. That fact helps to an understanding of his methods. He did not define his plan, but it had far-reaching perspective. The working out of such a plan would require methods having corresponding reach. We are accustomed to think that the world was ripe for his coming. So it was indeed, but not in the sense that the world was ready to receive him. The general world-situation had been slowly prepared for his coming, but he only found a few responsive souls. In general, he was not so much rejected as unrecognized, and there belonged to him

How Jesus Began

always the loneliness of misunderstanding. He was a light shining in darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not. He was come into a world which he himself had made, but the world knew him not. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." He stood isolated and unrecognized among the multitude. John the Baptist declared to the crowd gathered to him, "But there standeth one among you whom ye know not." How did Jesus face the situation? How and in what spirit did he begin? In the first place, he rejected every method that promised simply meretricious success. That was the meaning of the temptation in the wilderness. Success reached or achieved by short cuts and by wholesale is always a mock success. But its lure is displayed before every man's eyes, and its deception is the most fatal snare of life. Whatever Christ's method was to be, he settled it that it would not be any short-cut method. He saw at the beginning as clearly as at the end, when he declared it to Pilate, that his kingdom was not of this world. Therefore the forces of this world were not required and could not be employed. The conditions for the establishment and permanence of his kingdom were altogether other than those upon

which the kingdoms of the world depended. This fact has been the most difficult for the church to understand even to the present time. When the church has built up a kingdom founded on worldly authority and force and wealth, it has been no part of God's kingdom. The kingdom which Jesus went about to set up in the world was one whose coming was to be without external show and observation. Any time or effort expended by Jesus on external things would have been entirely vain and utterly aside from his purpose. If all of the kingdoms of this world promised him by Satan in the temptation had been given, it would have meant nothing. His kingdom was to be set up in human hearts. Therefore he addressed himself to the hearts of men. One human soul was large enough for the establishment of his kingdom. It could only come to individuals, and its extension could only be accomplished by individual conquests. The way in which Jesus began by singling out a very few people and planting in their hearts the vital seeds of the kingdom must have appeared to the worldly wisdom of men absurdly ineffective and hopeless; but it proceeded upon the very nature of spiritual things, and was divinely wise.

Jesus and His Mother

THE incident of the marriage of Cana of Galilee has several points of unusual interest. The presence of Jesus at a wedding feast is pleasant to think of as a matter of sentiment, but it is also significant and instructive. It shows us that Jesus did not enter upon his ministry in the spirit of an ascetic. In this respect he was in contrast with John the Baptist, who would have been out of place because out of harmony at such a festivity. Jesus entered cordially and sympathetically into the social joys of the people. By his presence there he put his blessing and seal of sanctity upon marriage for all time. We are glad to find nothing in the teachings or the actions of Jesus giving countenance to what with Paul was, at least, a doubt whether it is better to marry. And the miracle which he wrought is interesting for its own unique character, and because it was the beginning of those great "signs" by which he "manifested forth his glory." But the highest significance of the incident lies in the bearing of Jesus toward his mother. We take keen heart-interest in every appearance of the sacred mother, from the hour of the angelic annunciation down to that dreadful hour, so heavily weighted with sorrow, when she stood at the foot of the cross

and was committed by Jesus to the care of John. In the home at Nazareth Jesus lived obediently subject to his parents, and we may be sure was not lacking in affection and reverence. While Jesus lived with his mother as her son he gave to her the recognition to which she was entitled. We must not think of him in those years as a supernatural prodigy, an object of awe and wonder to the family. But a time came when Jesus entered upon a career over which his mother's authority did not extend. In that new and larger life she must claim no precedence or special privilege. There she must take her place with him not as his mother but as a woman along with others, and must not presume to dictate or direct. It is not only vain, but it is an error, to attempt to explain away what looks like a rebuke from Jesus to his mother. It was a rebuke, kind and full of love, but a rebuke that was intended and unmistakable. Jesus, the man, had a mother whom he had loved and reverenced and obeyed. But Jesus, the Christ, engaged in the work of the world's redemption, had no mother. In that work but one will was to be consulted—the will of his Father who was in heaven. In the fulfillment of that will no human inter-

ference could be tolerated, and no human presumption in directing could be permitted. Peter, chief of presumers, attempted that later on and drew upon himself a fearful rebuke. Who was so likely as his mother, on what may have seemed to her the warrant of a natural right, to assume to give some directions to Christ? The Cana marriage was probably the first time when she appeared with him after he had entered upon his work. It was almost inevitable that she should have continued toward him the bearing of motherly privilege which he had so cheerfully recognized in the old home days at Nazareth. Jesus understood how natural it was for her to do so. But he saw that she did not understand the new situation. It was necessary to awaken her to that. She must know that with him, and not with her, was the authority in the life upon which he had entered. "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." She understood and she never forgot. But with these words of Jesus to his mother at the threshold of his ministry is swept away the whole mass of fiction and superstition concerning the holy Madonna as having any part with Christ in redemption or power or authority.

FOR the first time (John 2. 4) Jesus here refers to "his hour." We find no other use of that expression except in reference to his death. We have a number of statements like that in John 7. 30: "Then they sought to take him; but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come." Toward the end we find Jesus beginning to speak of his hour being at hand. (Mark 14. 41; John 12. 23, 27; 13. 1; 17. 1.) That was the great hour, the climax of his mission, toward which from the beginning he was consciously pressing forward. But, evidently, when he said to his mother, "Mine hour is not yet come," he referred not to the end of his life but to some important crisis in his life or work. We cannot be certain what was in his mother's thought when she called his attention to the failing wine; but, apparently, what Jesus said to her, whether at the time she understood his meaning or not, was that the moment was not fully come for him to begin his work of special manifestation by miracles or signs. But it strikes us strangely that almost at once he proceeded to do the very thing the time for which he had just declared had not come. There is another very interesting example of this given in John

"Mine Hour"

7. 1-10. He declined the insistence of his brethren that he should go up to the feast, giving as a reason that his hour was not yet come; but his brethren had scarcely departed when he also went up to Jerusalem. All of which teaches us that in the plan of Christ's life the time for a thing was not come until it had fully arrived, and that he did not do things either a few minutes too early or too late.

The Nature of Christ's Anger

AT the famous impeachment trial of Warren Hastings a cultured woman of high social standing, a strong friend of the accused, and painfully anxious concerning the outcome of the trial, sat in the gallery listening to Edmund Burke as he delivered his great impeachment oration. She testified that for a long time she was overwhelmed by the terrific arraignment and the impassioned eloquence of the orator. Her heart sank and she well-nigh abandoned hope while the speaker was summoning the accused to the bar of universal conscience and pleading in the name of universal humanity for the poor and the defenseless whose rights had been so cruelly trampled upon. While so appealing the advocate was irresistible. But at

last she detected a change in the spirit of the orator. He was ceasing to speak for the eternal principles of justice and his denunciations ceased to be the stern and impersonal condemnations of righteousness, and he steadily descended to the plane of vituperation and hate. The spell was broken. She had been leaning forward listening with strained nerves and growing fear to every word; but when this descent from the impersonal to the personal occurred she leaned back and drew a deep breath of relief. Burke's case was lost. When he ceased to speak in the name of impartial and dispassionate justice and began to speak simply out of the rancor of his own heart, his strength had departed from him. In the light of this incident, which illustrates a very deep principle, we may study the anger of Christ. We have five or six instances in which he was moved to anger or indignation. The two cases of his cleansing the temple are the most notable, unless, perhaps, we except his fearful arraignment of the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisies. The study of all these accounts fails to reveal the slightest trace of personal feeling. In the presence of those who were turning the house of God into a den of thieves he spoke for the outraged

sanctity of the temple itself, and for the holiness of the God to which it had been dedicated. When he drove out the desecrators with a whip of small cords he did it under the warrant from the highest powers. It was not a hot gust of personal passion that broke upon the offenders; it was a great storm of divine wrath which swept them away. And when he arraigned the scribes and Pharisees there was no biting acid in the words distilled from his resentment of any injustice or wrong they had done to him. His speech had the terror of eternal judgment in it, and cleaved their hearts asunder like the sword of God. He marshaled into the light the foul and damning evidence summoned from the darkness of their own corrupted lives. He spoke for the widows and orphans whom they had robbed, for the poor whom they had stripped, for the law which they had nullified, and he tore away from their faces the masks of piety which they had worn for so long that they had forgotten the looks of their own souls. Anger like this requires no apology. It belongs to God as much as his love, and will forever flame and smite so long as hypocrisy and irreverent and unpitying greed are in the world. It is well for us to see the face of Jesus Christ in its anger

as well as in its tenderness, for the tenderness and the anger alike are God's.

WHY did Nicodemus go to Jesus that night? He could not help it. Not any mechanical necessity—that is cheap; and, besides, is not true in connection with human destiny. Jesus had gotten a grip on him which he could not shake off. The Spirit issues his writs and they run throughout the world. No doubt when he first began to feel the pull of that necessity Nicodemus asked himself why he should go and hunt Jesus up. There were many and strong reasons why he should not. His personal dignity was against it. He was rich; why should he go to this peasant teacher with his following of the poor? He was a man of high rank and honor; why should he go to this man without place or authority? He was educated and a master in the highest knowledge; why should he go to one who was evidently a stranger to the schools? His interests were against it. This Galilæan was in ill favor with the rulers and those whose good opinion it was important to maintain. Why should he peril his reputation even by a night visit

An Awakened Rabbi

to one whose words and actions had given such deadly offense to the chief men of the nation? We are sure he was not a man of sudden impulse, but reflective and very deliberate. There can be no reasonable doubt that he asked himself these questions and many more like them. Nevertheless, he went. The voice to which he had listened in the temple court, and which held him under a mighty spell, continued to ring in his ears. That face, more benignant than any other face, but most kingly, illumined by a mystic inner light, haunted him and searched him by its look. Those miracles which he had seen—the crippled healed, the sick man suddenly made whole, the blind to whom the world of light had in a moment been given back—all passed in unceasing review before him. There was much more than all that. His soul was stirred to depths of which he had not been aware. He was filled with a mighty unrest. Questions were awakened which he could not silence. The foundations of his life were shaken. The old certainties were unsettled. Were he and his fellow rabbis walking in darkness, and did this young teacher see a whole world of truth and reality to which they were utterly blind? If Jesus was right, they and their whole system of things, of

which they were so fearfully jealous, were all wrong. What did all his wealth and distinction signify if what this Galilæan was saying was true? If he had never seen or heard Jesus, he might have gone on as before, satisfied with himself and the prevailing order of things. But not now. Life would be a mockery with these questions unanswered. To refuse to obey the summons that had come to him would mean the suicide of his own soul. No matter about the protests of his pride and selfish interests, he must go. This explains that night visit. When he stood before Jesus and delivered his studied words of introduction, if he had spoken out of his whole heart he would have said, "Rabbi, I have come to you because I could not help it." Jesus understood it. He was not surprised. He was expecting him and waiting for him. And Nicodemus stands for the soul that has heard the awakening and commanding call of God.

WE must assume that Nicodemus went to Jesus having reflected upon and still pondering over the teachings to which he had listened when Jesus talked to the people in the temple area. To those re-

The Gate of the Kingdom

flections Jesus answered rather than to the formal words with which his visitor presented himself. In those teachings, as was his constant habit, Jesus without doubt made many references to the kingdom of God. What did he mean by the kingdom? How would it come? And how should it be recognized? Familiar as he was, of course, with the prevailing conception of the kingdom of God and the teachings of the great rabbis concerning it, Nicodemus must at once have seen that Christ's thought of it was new, but it perplexed him. The answer of Jesus struck at the fundamental error of the Jewish teachers, which was the idea of a material and external kingdom. Men like Nicodemus were watching for the coming of the kingdom of God, looking for all the signs of its approach. But Jesus declared that Nicodemus and his fellow rabbis were incapable of seeing the kingdom when it came. To a group of Pharisees on another occasion, who came asking when the kingdom of God should come, he replied: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." That was essentially what Jesus said to Nicodemus. The kingdom was always at

hand and always visible, but only to those having the kind of sight required for seeing it. It is a spiritual kingdom, only to be spiritually discerned, which can only be done by spiritual people. "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." That kingdom is from above and represents a world of things and a kind of life utterly unlike and higher than the natural world and natural life. It is a kingdom that cannot be seen from the outside but only from within, only known, and only capable of being known, by those who belong to it. And no one can gain entrance into it except by being born into it under the vitalizing power of God whose life is the life of that kingdom. It was the statement of a profound principle which applies to every sphere of existence. The gate leading from every lower to a higher kingdom is the gate of birth. The mineral can only pass into the vegetable kingdom by being born into it, by the vital power of the vegetable kingdom reaching down and transforming it. The vegetable can only gain entrance into the animal kingdom by being born from above, by the higher life of the animal laying hold upon it and imparting itself to it. Nicodemus should have considered that we come into this

natural life through the mysterious process of birth, and that this is the only gateway of entrance to it. If, then, there is a higher kingdom, called the kingdom of God, differing as widely from the natural life as the vegetable and animal kingdoms differ from the mineral, how should we expect to enter it except through the gate of another and higher birth? The white radiance of every lily born out of the mud of the marsh, every birdling in every nest breaking through its imprisoning shell into the world of wings and songs, and every babe on every mother's breast freshly come into life through the birth-chamber, should have told him that Jesus was stating a universal law. The kingdom of God represents the things which belong to the life of God; in order that we may see these things we must be born of God, just as we are able to see the things of the flesh only by having been born of the flesh. And this is what we may call evolution from above, as distinguished from that doctrine of materialistic evolution which holds that all lower forms of existence have in them the latencies of all higher forms, and that progress from the lower to the higher is by a process of evolution from below. But this is in the face of all natural facts. No clod by any

latency in itself has ever evolved into a rose. No vegetable matter by any inherent process, either sudden or slow, has ever taken to itself feet and wings. Each has been born from above, in each a process of evolution has been started, not by any of its own elements, but by a new and higher life-principle and power entering into it. Why, therefore, should it be thought incredible that we can only enter the kingdom of God by the birth-producing power of that kingdom coming upon us, when we see that that is the universal law of all the kingdoms of life? The new birth is in harmony with all science.

WHAT Jesus said to Nicodemus, while in its particulars it was specifically adapted to him, yet illustrates one of the essential principles of Christ's teachings. He employed germinal, generic truths. Truth with Jesus was always a living thing, having the power of indefinite growth and transformation. Truth was vital and vitalizing, never dead. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, they are life." So teaches the parable of the sower, in which the good seed is declared to be the words of the kingdom, seeds

Germinal Teaching

that take root and spring up and bear grain. So teaches the parable of the leaven, in which the truth by a process of vital assimilation transforms the meal. Jesus had faith in his truth that it would work out results if it could only be gotten into the hearts of men and given a fair chance. In any case, there was no way to save men except by the truth. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Jesus was not in haste about the process of changing men. He had the patience that sprang from faith in the power of the truth. So, looking into the heart of Nicodemus, he saw soil of sufficient depth and richness to warrant him in planting in it the seed of a great germinal truth—a seed which, when it should begin to grow, would have vital energy sufficient to transform the whole nature of this thoughtful and candid ruler of the Jews. Nicodemus came to him hoping for some words that would make everything clear to him and settle the convictions already produced by what he had seen and heard. Instead Jesus met him with a declaration that involved him for the time in utter confusion. It was one of those great truths to be brooded over, and lived with, and permitted to work out its deep and silent effects in the heart. Jesus was

content to plant the truth in his heart and let him go his way, sure that if he could be saved at all, that truth would save him. And the subsequent glimpses we get of Nicodemus indicate that the truth did not fail in its transforming effects (John 7. 50; 19. 39).

A MAN'S qualities are drawn out by the people with whom he comes in contact. We may best study a person's character in its reactions when his life touches upon other lives. How does a man think of, speak to, and act toward people of a certain kind? That answered, you have so far a revelation of him. We must study Christ in this way. And the gospel history gives us abundant material for such study. In it Jesus is put in vital relations with people, presented in various social settings. When we study his bearing and spirit at the marriage of Cana we know that he was in warm sympathy with all natural social life and joy. He came into contact with the poor, the rich, the most unfortunate, social outcasts, aliens, peasants, and rulers, illiterate and learned, the humble and the proud, the sincere and the hypocritical. In each situation and in each relation partic-

Christ's Attitude Toward Nicodemus

ular phases of the character of Jesus were revealed. It is notable that the gospels contain no eulogies of Christ, no attempts to analyze or describe his character. His life is simply made to pass before us and we are left to infer what he was by what he did in the changing human relations in which he was placed. The meeting with Nicodemus is a most instructive incident as throwing strong light upon Christ's character. It is fortunate that we are given to know how Jesus felt and acted toward a man like Nicodemus. For one thing, it shows us how completely free he was from moral prejudice. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, which at that time was a synonym for hypocrite. It is very difficult to be perfectly fair and just to one who belongs to an odious company. But Jesus knew the man was not a hypocrite and did not confound him with his class. Nicodemus was very rich and Jesus was poor. But Jesus had no touch of Crœsusphobia. Wealth he regarded simply as an accident of life, not necessarily having anything to do with a man's worthiness, even as poverty has not. A man is neither better nor worse because of being either rich or poor. One may be honorably or dishonorably either the one or the other. Jesus saw the real man

in whatever setting of conditions he appeared. He knew that riches held great temptations for the men who possessed them, and he was sorry for those who were harmed by their wealth. But there is not a syllable in the gospel to encourage the irrational outcry against the rich. The demagogue and the unbalanced socialist find no support in Christ. To Christ a man was a man in spite of his wealth and in spite of his poverty, and never anything but that. Nicodemus was educated, a scholar. Jesus had no quarrel with him on that score. The Bible nowhere exalts ignorance; certainly Jesus never did. There is a shallow spirit which indulges in ranting condemnation of scholarship and educated people, making a virtue of ignorance. There was nothing of this disposition in Christ. There is a pride and insolence of knowledge, and there is a pride and insolence of ignorance, and it is doubtful which is the more detestable. Jesus knew that Nicodemus was an educated and cultured man, and dealt with him as such. What he said to him he would not have said to a less informed and thoughtful man. It would have been a mistake to attempt to deal with him as he dealt with uncultivated people. On the other hand, Jesus attached no moral

importance to Nicodemus's knowledge. An unregenerated scholar is just as blind to the facts of the kingdom as an unregenerated ignoramus, but no more so; but with this difference, that the man of knowledge after he is regenerated has the advantage of the regenerated ignoramus; for knowledge may be used by the Spirit, but ignorance cannot be put to any high uses.

Jesus and Social Conventions

CHRIST talking with the woman at Jacob's Well was a compound offense against established conventions. A Samaritan, a woman, and a sinner—by all Jewish proprieties he should not have talked with her. But we must not infer too much from his actions. He did not mean that the rules which he disregarded never had any justification. The refusal of the Jews to have any dealings with the Samaritans had its roots in history. It began with Nehemiah's refusal to permit them to join with him in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. It was a part of the divinely commanded exclusiveness of the Jewish nation, necessary for important ends; and while it finally degenerated, as in this instance, into blind prejudice and bitter enmity, in its

initial purpose it was legitimate. And the restriction placed upon speaking with women in public, and the social ostracism of women lost to virtue, were things resting upon good reasons. Jesus did not mean to abolish such social conventions established in the interest of good morals. What Jesus did in this case was in principle what he did in his technical infraction of the law of the Sabbath. He approved the plucking of wheat by his disciples on the Sabbath, and he repeatedly healed the sick on the Sabbath. But that did not mean that he would abrogate all Sabbath restrictions. It simply meant that conventions must give way to the higher moral demands. We still insist that, as a general rule, much reserve is necessary in the social relations of men and women who are strangers, and that moral self-respect will deter a man from recognizing a woman of evil character. But this does not imply that women shall be thought of as inferior, or that he fallen shall be excluded from our sympathy and interest. Social conventions may not be dispensed with, but they should have a certain pliability. If they become not walls of defense but imprisonment, they miss their true purpose, for it is not their function to confine the soul and prevent the exercise of its highest

freedom. But society would be ruined if completely deconventionalized. We must understand just what Christ's ignoring of such laws of custom meant. He was not a lawbreaker, of laws written or unwritten. He walked orderly, according to the customs and requirements of his times. He was far from being a professional iconoclast. And yet he always had a perfectly clear perception of the demands of those higher laws of the soul which rise above all the temporary expedients of social conventions; and without any noise or advertisement he simply and calmly ignored everything which conflicted with them. But he never made any mistake, as so many sincere but deluded revolters against social customs do, in not distinguishing between the essential and the unessential. It is greatly worth while for us to study him in this respect.

THE eternal ever broods over us, and the highest touches our lives at points of the veriest commonplace. Life always has in it the spirit of high adventure, for at any step some great surprise may arise, and any hour may be freighted with destiny. Into the trivialities of any day some great event may

suddenly enter, into the listlessness of our most unthinking moments some great word may be spoken, upon our dullest sleep at any midnight some great light may break, and the whole of life for us be forever changed. There is always a divine romance in progress in the life of every man and woman, however obscure they may be; for the little circle of their common days may at any time be intersected by the lines of that vast circle of purpose at the center of which stands God. If for no other reason than to remind us of this mystic nearness to us of the unseen world, the story of Christ's meeting with the woman of Samaria is of the highest value. She came forth that noonday out of a life that had moved on a very low level, cheap and coarse and carnal, the joys of which had not been like cool, clear springs, but like foul and muddy pools. She little thought that she had come to an hour that was to transform and transfigure her, and lift her life out of its shame and meaninglessness into beauty and order, and turn her feet toward heaven. The story lays hold on us because of the fact that Jesus thought it worth while to bring to bear upon such a woman for her saving the power of the highest truth. There is all the might of the world to come in God's efforts to rescue

The Mystic Touch of Destiny

and lift up a fallen soul. The lever for the lifting of a soul out of the depths of degradation has its fulcrum in the highest heaven. Men have been sounding these words of Christ with growing amazement at their depth and height of spiritual understanding. He condensed into the simple illustration of a "well of water springing up into everlasting life" the whole philosophy of real life and enduring happiness. How complete was his understanding of the fret and fever and disappointment of the world, ever drawing from its wells of pleasure, and yet ever burning with thirst! And his words fall upon the restlessness of humanity like the music of a stream coming down out of the white, pure snow lying on the silent mountaintops. Then, too, he spoke the last and highest word concerning worship, that divinest act of which the human soul is capable. Men had been worshiping always, because they could not resist the instinctive impulse, but they knew not what they worshiped and they worshiped in many mistaken forms. Only one who knew the secrets of God could have spoken these words, lifting the whole subject of worship out of the confusion of misconception and misleading practice, and setting it in the clear light of

self-evidencing truth. We repeat the words again and again, and they are like a strain of pure harmony sounding out over the discordant cries and superstitious mummeries and vain shows and dark and dreadful rites of the religions of the world. And, finally, he disclosed himself as the Messiah, the hope of the ages, the realization of the dreams and the visions of the prophets, the long-expected Revealer of truth and the Saviour of mankind. Such things might well have been spoken on some high occasion in the hearing of a selected audience of the greatest of men. But as a matter of fact, they were spoken to one sinful woman who came to draw water out of Jacob's Well, but in whose heart were the dry ashes of a disappointed life, and who had nothing to commend her but her sin and hopelessness and sore need of help.

GREAT interest attaches to this interview of Jesus with the woman of Samaria because, being described with so much detail, it illustrates his method of evangelism. The characteristic feature of that method was that it was personal. This not simply that Jesus was addressing himself to

Christ's Methods of Evangelism

one person, but that he adapted his method to the individual peculiarities and qualities of that one person. One unvarying method applied to every person, though taken separately and singly, is not the personal method, any more than a common method applied to a multitude. Jesus dealt with the woman in view of her own personality and history, and he did this always. His method with Nicodemus, and the young ruler, and Zacchæus, was in each case strictly personal. What he said to one would not have been adapted to the other. They were different, and therefore he dealt with them differently. The wise hunter adapts his methods to the game he is hunting. All of which should show us the necessity for the successful winning of people to Christ of a thorough knowledge of human nature in general, and in addition of a specific knowledge of the individuals whom we seek to influence. This Samaritan woman was disreputable. She was in the disgrace and contempt which have always attached to women who have sacrificed their virtue. The world despised such women then, and still despises them. And the disposition on the part of religious people was to cast them out and utterly avoid them, entertaining for them no hope. And that is still the practical attitude of Chris-

tian people toward them. In the time of Jesus the Jews put publicans, the detested tax collectors for the Roman government, upon a level of contempt and shame with the harlots. These two classes stood outside the sympathy and hope of all self-respecting people. Now, it was characteristic of Jesus that he made himself the friend of the disreputable and disgraced. He knew, in the first place, that their sin was not greater than that of others not so despised. Pride and avarice and hypocrisy were in his eyes quite as shameful as the sin of the social outcasts. Then, too, he had hope for all sinners. His ability to save was not limited to a certain class of sins. So, as in the case of this woman, in the case of the woman of Magdala, and in the case of the publicans, Matthew and Zacchæus, he took the part of the disgraced. It is clear that we have but very imperfectly followed his example. And the gospel never displays its full saving powers among the respectable classes until it has been carried effectively to the most disreputable. The gospel is shorn of its power when any are excluded from its benefits and graces. The old well at Sychar, which until recently was half filled with rocks and rubbish, its springs choked and its waters

rarely ever within reach, in its neglected state was a very perfect type of the woman's heart who talked with Jesus, and of the hearts of multitudes of people now living. The springs of good in her were choked and buried under much moral rubbish and ruin. But the springs were there. It only needed some one to reach them and open them. Jesus did that, though it required much and patient digging. And this is the encouragement we may always have, that the human heart has in it, however deeply buried, the fountain of good desire. It is the mission of Christian people to find and open these springs. When once they are set flowing the salvation of the soul is accomplished, for salvation is not something wrought on the soul, but in the soul; not something brought into the life, but the opening up of the sources of life in the heart itself. That was what happened with this woman. She was awakened. The buried and seemingly dead hope in her was quickened. Long-silenced voices in the central chambers of her soul began to speak. She began to desire, to crave, to cry out. She began to feel that a better life was possible, that the old life of shame might be put away. The very thing that Jesus was saying to her she began to experience—the springs of new

thoughts and new feelings and new hopes were opened in her heart, "a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." No man is saved until those springs are opened within him. And it is the unique peculiarity of the gospel, and one of the great proofs of its divinity, that it has just the needed power to awaken and open and draw out the smothered and buried elements of good in the soul.

The Aspects and Stages of Faith

IN quality faith is always the same, but its causes are various. Whoever believes in Christ accepts him as what he claims to be. But what leads a given person to believe is a matter for inquiry. Faith has its beginning and its completion, its birth and its growth. It may be arrested in its growth or be abandoned, and so come to nothing; or it may be strengthened and come to more and more. But it is always the acceptance of Christ. Take the faiths described in connection with the incident of the woman of Samaria. She passed from bantering impertinence through thoughtful respect, in the first place, to the surprised acknowledgment of Christ as a prophet; and finally, through a deep heart-awakening, to belief in him as the Mes-

siah. Jesus worked no material miracle for her. She was convinced by the miracle of Christ's penetrative knowledge of the secrets of her life and the depths of her heart. That sufficed for her. Her faith was not based on any testimony of others, for her knowledge was direct. But we are told in the sequel that "many Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman." That sufficed for them, as such testimony is sufficient for many now. But it is immediately added that "many more believed on him because of his own words." The process differed, but it came to the same end. Or, take the case of the nobleman who came to Cana to entreat Christ to heal his son. He went because of a hope awakened by the testimony of those who had witnessed Christ's miracles. That was enough for a beginning, as anything is enough that sends a soul seeking after Christ. But when Jesus simply said to him, "Go, thy son liveth," he believed his word and went. Later, when he found his son restored, and knew that the hour of his recovery corresponded to the time when Jesus said, "Thy son liveth," he was fully convinced, and he and all his household believed. The cause of his complete faith was complex, but its outcome

was acceptance. The case of the impotent man healed at the pool of Bethesda is still another illustration of variation in the origin of faith. He was not healed because he believed, but he believed because he had been healed. His healing came to him as a wonderful surprise. Others had believed because they had witnessed the miraculous healing of others; this man believed because he had experienced the miracle of healing in himself. Jesus had required faith on the part of others as the condition for their healing; in this case he healed without faith in order to produce faith. No matter, the essential thing was faith. The same varying process still goes on. One man believes because his reason has been convinced, and another because his heart has been touched and stirred. One comes to faith under the gracious influence or entreaties of loved ones, while another reaches it through deep sorrow and the fires of affliction. The way is unimportant, the faith itself is the great matter; and, however reached, that faith is always the same—the acceptance of Jesus Christ as what he claims to be and for all that he offers to do for the soul.

The Imagination of the Heart

WE have reached a very suitable point for the consideration of the importance of the imagination of the heart in the interpretation of the life of Christ. Heart-imagination, let it be understood, is quite different from purely mental imagination, although the latter is also necessary in all study of history. The heart gives emotional expansion and coloring and penetrates to depths of meaning and discerns qualities beyond the reach of the intellectual understanding. Nowhere does mere cold intellectuality more utterly fail than in dealing with the gospel story. If anyone imagines that he has possessed himself of the full knowledge of Christ's life when he has clearly set before his mind all the facts of his history, he greatly deceives himself, for this reason, that what he calls all the facts—the complete chronological analysis of the events recorded—does not represent all, not the most vital elements of this wonderful life. A primary mistake which intellectualism makes in its attempts to interpret the Gospels is its failure to recognize that the revelation which Christ made was a revelation to the emotional nature as well as to the intellect. Jesus was not simply intellect, but heart also, and his heart was as deep and rich

as his mind was clear and strong. Consequently, it is equally important that we should know how Jesus felt as that we should know how he thought. Indeed, we cannot understand his thinking unless we understand his feelings. He was filled with sorrowful indignation toward those who forbade little children to be brought unto him, when he said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." The teaching must be interpreted in the glow of that indignation against the misconception of childhood which has resulted in so much injustice and harm. When Jesus said to the wealth-loving but soul-hungry young ruler, "Sell all that thou hast and distribute to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, and follow me," he spoke out of a very tender feeling; for the words follow the statement, "Then Jesus beholding him loved him." We must feel the glow of love in the words before we can fully understand them. Those were great words which he spoke before the tomb of Lazarus, "I am the resurrection and the life," but they mean infinitely more to us because they were spoken by lips trembling with pitying sympathy and by one whose face was tear-stained; for they are joined with the statement so full of meaning,

"Jesus wept." We are almost stunned by the fearful arraignment of the scribes and Pharisees given in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew—peal of thunder upon thunder, with lightning-flames like the flashing sword of God—but we understand it when we see the heart of Christ breaking in unutterable pity over the city upon which his consuming anathemas had been falling, for that storm of wrath was followed by the words, full of heart-breaking compassion and sorrow, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, and ye would not!" And no one should repeat Christ's words concerning the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched, unless he is able to recognize the tears in the voice of him who uttered them. The proclamation of such words except in a spirit of measureless sadness like that which filled the heart of Christ is a horrible misrepresentation of the truth. We must carry our hearts into the study of the Gospels, or we will utterly fail to understand them.

NO occasion in the life of Jesus, always excepting the Last Supper, reveals the depth and richness of his sympathies like the incident of the feeding of the five thousand. It requires for its appreciation and understanding the exercise of a good deal of that heart-imagination of which I have just been speaking, in order that the atmosphere of the occasion may be recreated. Without that atmosphere the happenings of the day will lack the color and glow which gives them their highest interest. Under the influence of such an imagination we will see the play of warm but strong emotions through all the events, like the pulsing electric waves throbbing through the evening cloud, soft but splendid, revealing by vague suggestions depths within depths of sky and color, that made that day, from its calm sunrise to its stormy midnight, a great poem, a wonderful piece of music. Using the external circumstances simply as reflectors, let us, if we may, look in upon the feelings of Jesus which prevailed on that memorable, crisis-making day. In general, the heart of Jesus was sad with unusual sadness. In the first place there had just come to him the news of that tragedy in Herod's dungeon, the death of John the Baptist. For

A Day of Heart-Revelation

himself this melancholy news caused him to desire the quiet of retirement. Matthew tells us, "When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart." A hurt heart finds solace in solitude, and Jesus must have been very deeply affected by the cruel fate of his brave forerunner and witness. With this sorrow united a tender solicitude for his disciples, who had just returned from their first independent mission on which he had sent them forth, weary and nervously depleted. To them, fagged and spent, he said, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile." And so the sorrowing Master and the tired disciples thought to slip away across the fresh waters of the lake to some secluded spot on the other side among the hills for a healing, restful holiday. But shortly Christ's own sorrow and his kindly interest in his disciples were swallowed up in a larger pity and sorrow, a sympathy for the sadness and misery of the multitude. When he landed he saw a great company that had run around the lake to intercept him, and he "was moved with compassion toward them, for they were as sheep not having a shepherd." The holiday purpose was forgotten while he taught them many things, continuing until the evening.

Then his compassion was stirred for their physical hunger and fainting, and he was prompted to the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. That was the climax, as to popular effect, of his miracles. The enthusiasm awakened was that of thousands, each one of whom had been made the subject of miraculous grace. But the effect on the mind of Jesus himself was to produce a still deeper sadness, the feeling of utter disappointment. He saw that the enthusiasm had its origin not in the hearts of the people but in their physical appetite. He made haste to send his disciples away, that they might not be infected by that ignoble spirit, and, dismissing the people, he sought the solitude of the mountains, where he gave himself up to his heavy thoughts. That lonely vigil, we may well believe when we consider the feelings which Jesus carried to it, was an anticipation of the sorrow of Gethsemane; for the acclaim of the blind multitude that day bore to his soul in their ominous undertones the jeerings and mockings which he was to hear from the pitiless mob that would gather about his cross. The people, no doubt, considered the day for him to be a triumph, but to him it was the premonition of Calvary. And thus the promise

of a holiday ended for the Master in the loneliness of sorrow, and for the disciples in the terror of the midnight tempest.

The Worst Effects of Sin

WHEN Jesus said to the man after he was healed, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee," he unquestionably implied that his bodily infirmity was the effect of his own sin. It was not an inherited infirmity, for in that case Christ's words would have been inappropriate. Not for any sin of parents, but for his own sin, this man had been helpless for thirty-eight years. That is a striking comment on the seriousness of the view which nature takes of sin. And we have come to know that nature is grim and remorseless in the infliction of punishment for the transgression of law. The commission of sin may take but a little time, while its penalty may cover a whole life. In the case of the impotent man Jesus implied that, dreadful as his punishment had been, it was not the limit. "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." Worse things have come to thousands of people because of their sins. And we must not forget that sin in this world is punished in ways besides physical wretchedness.

A crippled intellect is worse than a crippled body. A loathsome mind filled with impure thoughts is worse than a body smitten with loathsome disease, and the most dreadful penalties for sin are visited upon the moral nature. Moral degradation, the loss of the crowning qualities which make man better than the brute, the development of passions and appetites which turn the heart into a dwelling place of demons, the scourgings of conscience and the agonies of despair—these are the things which show us what a grievous and dreadful thing sin is in the world. All these things appear here in this world and now in this life. We need scarcely inquire about the punishment of sin in the life to come. Its punishment in this life is so appalling as to stagger the imagination.

JESUS found it hard to secure rest. The clamor and insistence of human want defeated his purpose in this case. The people observed his departure with his disciples and guessed their destination, and a great multitude of men, women, and children journeyed on foot about the northern end of the sea and came to him in the desert place to

Unresting Love

which he had resorted. To us it looks like unreasonable intrusion and lack of consideration on the part of the people that might well have been rebuked. But Jesus understood it. He gave no sign of disappointment or resentment. "Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick." All personal need of rest was forgotten in the presence of that footsore, heartsore, and weary multitude that had traveled many hours to find him; and the soreness and sadness of his own heart were insignificant as he looked upon the wretchedness represented by that appealing crowd. And this is the fate of the lovers and helpers of men always—the want of the world pursues them and gives them no rest. It is hard for love to take a vacation. The philanthropist can scarcely have any privacy. The great world has so many needs, and there are so few who will attempt to minister to them, that the very objects of benevolence, by the pressure of their wants, are likely to overwhelm their benefactors. The world runs after its helpers because they are so sorely needed. Their disappearance even for a little while is missed. There are men and women of great wealth who can go where they please and stay as long as

they will, and the world will go on just the same and they will not be missed, for they do nothing for the world wherever they may be. But it is the proof of their worthlessness that the sorrows and needs of the world do not knock at their doors when they are at home nor follow them into the wilderness where they sometimes go for relief from the weariness of their inane pursuit of pleasure. The centers of the world's highest interests are represented by the men and women who, in their love and compassion, permit the needs of humanity to give them scant opportunity for rest. The man who knows nothing of the insistence and pursuit of human need should not congratulate himself on account of the exemption. It is the sign of his selfishness his emptiness, and his uselessness.

The Evangelistic Cry

IT is most interesting to observe how, over and over again, and under conditions the most depressing and discouraging, the heart of Jesus broke forth into what may be called "the evangelistic cry," "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." The very enmity and hatred about him moved him to compassion. The people needed him,

they were perishing for that which he had to give. And at times he seemed unable to restrain the cry of his soul and proclaimed himself as the source of life. So a little later when the hostility had grown even more intense, he cried out again, proclaiming himself as the "light of the world" (John 8. 12). So, too, after that fearful denunciation of the scribes and the Pharisees his heart broke forth into the compassionate cry, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings" (Matt. 23. 37). And we find the same soul-cry of longing breaking from his heart after his terrific arraignment of the cities of Galilee in which he had done his mightiest works, but which had not believed nor repented. He foresaw their doom; but even while he described it he cried out, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11. 28). Christ was always the Evangelist; his heart was always wrung with pity for sin-enslaved and perishing humanity, and in the midst of their misery and madness and blindness he proclaimed himself as their only Advocate, Helper, and Saviour. And the darker and more discouraging the aspects

under which life presented itself, the more intense was his desire to save, the more appealing his evangelistic cry.

THE sight of the blind man set the disciples of Christ speculating. We cannot be sure just what or how many theories were in their minds when they asked their question whether the man's blindness was due to his own sin or that of his parents. That his affliction could have been due to his own sin before he was born probably was suggested to them by one of those refined teachings of the rabbis that a child yet unborn could have sinful emotions. That the blindness might be due to the sins of the man's parents had much authority from the Scriptures themselves, in the declaration that God will punish transgression even unto the third and fourth generations. But the first thing to observe is that the disciples took only a speculative interest in the unfortunate man. They were ready to discuss his case. He raised some curious questions in their minds. But the interest of Jesus in the man was sympathetic and philanthropic. Jesus was interested in the man, not in any speculations about him. The im-

Speculative Interest in Wretchedness

portant thing was not who was responsible for the blindness, but whether the blindness could be cured. And we may yet find these two kinds of interest in the unfortunate people of the world—the curious and the benevolent. There are those who will discuss theories about poverty the year round who will do nothing whatever to relieve poverty. The mistake of the disciples did not consist in assuming that there is a connection between sin and misfortune and suffering, but that there is always such connection. That was the mistake that Job's friends made. They would have it that his afflictions constituted prima facie evidence that he had sinned. Job protested, and in the end God sustained his protest. That was the popular misconception concerning certain persons whom Pilate had put to death, and certain others upon whom the tower of Siloam had fallen (Luke 13. 1-5). Jesus repudiated the notion. But in correcting this mistake we must not go to the other extreme. In denying that this man's blindness was due either to his parents' sins or his own Jesus did not declare that the man and his parents had not sinned, nor that there was never any connection between sin and suffering. He merely declared that that case was not to be so explained. In

the case of the impotent man whom he healed at the pool of Bethesda, to whom he said, "Go and sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee," he clearly implied that the man's affliction was the result of his sin. That such is the case yet we can see in unlimited instances in which suffering of the most terrible sort is brought upon people because of their sins. And we know, too, that children do often suffer untold misery because of the sins of their parents. Children are born blind, and deaf, and crippled, and idiotic, and morally perverted because their parents sinned, sometimes long years before the child was born. It is nature's, that is God's, terrible way of impressing us with the serious view taken of sin in the moral government of the world. Only we must remember that suffering in some cases has other explanation than this.

WE must keep in mind that Jesus was aiming not simply to present and describe himself as the true Shepherd, but by contrast to describe the character of the false shepherd. It will be best that we substitute the word "pastor" for "shepherd," for while the words have the same meaning,

"pastor" is the present-day title of one who has the spiritual care of others. Only I think we should enlarge the scope of the term beyond the special class of "ministers" or "preachers" who have official charge of congregations, to include all who in any way have moral and spiritual responsibility for others. Particularly this should include teachers, not only in the Sunday schools but in the public schools and schools of higher learning. We should see clearly what the characteristics of the false "pastor" or shepherd are: First of all, Jesus declares that he does not come into his position by "the door" of the sheepfold, but climbs up some other way. Directly afterward Jesus declared himself to be that door. The false pastor or teacher, therefore, has evaded Jesus, and so is not Christ's representative and has not his spirit. The false pastor or shepherd does not know those for whose care he is responsible, and they do not know him. He is a "stranger." This, of course, refers to spiritual acquaintance and understanding. To know people "after the flesh" is one thing, but to know them "after the spirit" is quite another (2 Cor. 5. 16). But the chief feature of the false pastor or shepherd is his selfishness. His thought

The False Pastor

is not what he can do for those under his care, but what he can make them do for him. He exists not for the sheep, but the sheep for him. He is a thief and a robber; he is come to steal and to kill. Severe as that is, it is not too severe to say of a man who has entered the office of the Christian ministry and is controlled in it by selfish motives—who is concerned chiefly about salary, and advancement, and honors. But the application does not end with the minister. Any man who is in this world for himself, who is interested in other people for what he can get out of them, is also a "thief and a robber." There are brigands, and freebooters, and pirates in a much broader sense than the definitions of the law. And it is a simple matter to determine whether one is in his relations to others a shepherd or a robber. Let him answer the question without flinching, "Is my dominant thought of people what I can do for them, or what they can do for me?"

EXCEPT for the two miracles of the feeding of the five thousand and later the four thousand, we have no reference to any ministering to the hungry by Jesus.

The Deeper Charity

And, clearly, those were exceptional cases. Probably very few, if any, of those who made up those two companies ordinarily required a supply of food by charity. But it cannot be inferred from this that Jesus was not accustomed to give alms. Out of the common treasury, "the bag" which Judas seems to have carried, no doubt modest gifts were drawn for the relief of unusual need. That is probably implied in the protest which Judas made against what he regarded as an extravagant sacrifice to sentiment by Mary of Bethany when she anointed Jesus with the contents of the precious alabaster box. "It might have been sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor." Not, as John remarks, that Judas cared for the poor, but it was an argument that he felt would appeal to Jesus. That Jesus approved of charity, not, of course, of any indiscriminate kind, is indicated by his words to the rich young ruler: "Sell all that thou hast and distribute to the poor." And that he was strongly on the side of all humane sentiments the parable of the good Samaritan stands in noble evidence. If he may not have used his miraculous power but twice to feed the hungry, he used those powers lavishly in relieving other and more distressing ills; and

his unfailing sympathy was not merely an unspent sentiment, for his life is justly characterized by the statement that "he went about doing good." But Jesus made no mistake concerning the relative importance of charity. He knew that the causes of want and misery to which charity ministers are moral, and that their removal can only be effected through moral forces. His highest mission was not that of an almsgiver, a humanitarian seeking to alleviate the physical wretchedness of mankind. He did not permit his humane activities to overshadow his higher purposes. He was a healer of the sick, but that was incidental; he fed the five thousand, but that was a secondary matter; his work of teaching them which had occupied him throughout the day was the chief thing. He saw to it on the next day that the notion of the people who had eaten of the loaves and fishes, that he might become for them a kind of commissary-king, should be effectively exploded. One of the most superficial errors of our time is that of so-called Christian Science, which would make bodily healing the main object of faith. And there is a persistent tendency on the part of many to make Christianity merely a religion of humanitarianism. It is a religion of humanita-

rianism, but it is vastly more than that. And it is effective and unfailing as such an agency just because it is more and higher than a religion of humanity. The roots of life are spiritual, and the secret of the good fruits and the evil fruits of life—its wealth and its poverty, its health and its sicknesses, its happiness and its misery—lie in those spiritual roots. Jesus was the great Physician, but he was great because his diagnosis of the sickness of the world did not stop with its symptoms but penetrated to its ultimate causes.

Killing Popularity

THE feeding of the five thousand was a crisis-event. It marked the culmination of Christ's popularity, when the enthusiasm of the people mounted to a crest like a great wave, then broke and drew back, and never mounted again. But it marked also a change in the attitude and method of Jesus. The period following is usually called the period of hostility. The popularity and enthusiasm were genuine and might have been maintained and increased if Jesus had permitted it. But he did not permit it. The popularity and enthusiasm, being of the kind they were, threatened to defeat his higher purposes; and so he

ended them at once. It is important that we see in the hostility that followed that Jesus broke the peace. He was the aggressor. The essential significance of the change is missed if we suppose that the people suddenly turned against Jesus. Jesus turned against the people, deliberately and of moral necessity. He was not come to send peace but a sword. When he came back to Capernaum, after that day when he multiplied the loaves and fishes, the sword was in his hand, and he did not sheathe it until the stern fight was finished. The people who gathered about him when he delivered his discourse on the bread of life were largely his friends. He offended and alienated the majority of them, and sent them away from him sorrowful and disappointed and confused. They had hoped much from him, they were inclined to follow him, but after that discourse it was impossible. This was the hardest thing which Jesus was called upon to do, to strike his friends. There were those who from the beginning were his enemies, and who were always against him, and who entertained nothing but evil purposes regarding him. Them he struck, never with bitterness, but without any hesitation and without compunction. But nine tenths of those people at Capernaum were

friendly to him, and if necessary would have defended him even with their lives. But it was necessary for him to offend and alienate them, simply because their friendship for him rested upon a wrong foundation. He could not honestly retain it; to have done so would have been obtaining something under false pretenses. He had to make them his enemies before there could be any possibility of making them his real friends. But we must not think that he turned the sword against those friendly people without keen pain to himself. We must believe that after the people had turned away from him, when he turned to the twelve and asked, "Will ye also go away?" his face was inexpressibly sad and his voice had in it a suffering pathos. He would, he must, declare the truth to them, but he did not reproach them. They had entirely misconceived him; they could not understand what he was saying to them about himself. They had in their mouths even then the taste of the bread with which he had fed them on the yesterday; and when he talked to them about the bread from heaven, about eating his flesh and drinking his blood, about believing on him in a way that would bring to them everlasting life, they could not comprehend him. There was no help for

It, he had to turn them away. It was necessary to wait; the Twelve would come after awhile to understand his meaning; and slowly the truth would take hold on the world that he was offering to men the opportunity to enter into eternal life, which is the life of God.

IT is easy for us to say that those who first heard Christ's discourse on the bread of life did not understand him. But, really, what did he mean? Are we sure that *we* understand him? Let us go over the road on which those people lost their way, and see if we are able to follow it out into the light of a clear comprehension. In general, they had no conception of Christ's spiritual mission. They had seen him heal the sick, and five thousand of them had eaten to fullness of the bread that he had miraculously provided. But the high suggestion of the miracle escaped them. What interested them was the possibility of being continuously fed by him. They were not wicked, they were stupid; but their stupidity had to be exposed. When they found Jesus in Capernaum they asked, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" They called him "rabbi," which should have implied that they were

The Blindness of Literalism

seeking him for the sake of his teachings. But Jesus compelled them to see just where they stood. "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." Then he told them of the better bread he would give them if they would only understand and seek and receive it. Their interest at first revived and they prayed, "Lord, evermore give us this bread," just as the woman of Samaria, with the same blindness of literalism, had said, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." They thought he was talking about loaves and fishes again. Then he put the matter in such terms that a literal meaning was impossible. He declared that he himself was the bread of life; that men must eat of his flesh and drink his blood that they might have eternal life. Then they became confused, and began to ask, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" It was on a level in spiritual stupidity with the question of Nicodemus, "How can a man be born when he is old?" And yet those people were not fools; certainly, the woman of Samaria and Nicodemus were far from being such. Their stupidity was not intellectual but spiritual. They stumbled over the rock of literalism. Lacking spiritual sight, there

was nothing but the literal meaning for them, and that was meaningless. And how is it with us? As a matter of fact, literalism still stumbles over these teachings. It is not the literalism of the eyes but of theology. We turn the whole matter of the eating of Christ's flesh and drinking his blood into a doctrine of systematic theology. It is not that the doctrine of the sacrificial atonement is not true, for it is, and is very important; but people entered into that vital relation with Christ in which they dwelt in him and he in them, who knew nothing about this doctrine, and thousands do so still. The atonement stands for what God has done for us; but the eating and drinking to which Jesus referred is something that we must do. We receive him, and in receiving him we receive the life that is in him; and this reception involves the utter surrender of ourselves to him and devotion to his service. It is not a matter of theology but of vital appropriation.

WE cannot afford to fail to study the Christ-Militant, with moral wrath in his heart and the fire of battle in his eyes. The leaders of the Jews, the scribes and Pharisees, were not only spiritually stupid,

they were wicked. This made a great difference in Christ's way of dealing with them. With the merely stupid, as we have seen, he dealt kindly though firmly, for they were often honest; but with cavilers and enemies of the truth he dealt mercilessly, for they were insincere and malicious. The first he expostulated with and sought to enlighten; the second he sternly resisted and smote unsparingly. It was a moral conflict between Jesus and the rulers. They hated him with the immemorial hatred of the evil for the good. There was no possible harmony between them. They represented moral antipodes. It was a clash between his unselfishness and simplicity and sincerity and their corruption and avarice and pride and hypocrisy. It was an elemental strife. The occasions which brought on particular conflicts were merely accidental. The rulers laid hold upon them for tactical purposes. There was the healing of the impotent man, and the giving of sight to the man born blind, both on a Sabbath day; but the Sabbath question was not vital, it served the purpose of his enemies to accuse and attack him. When something did not happen that would play into their hands they made something happen. Thus they brought to him

The Militant Christ

the woman taken in adultery, in order to draw from him some expression furnishing a basis for accusation. And so they came asking whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar. Anything would do. For reasons deeper than any that they put forward they hated him and were settled in their purpose to destroy him. The situation created reveals Christ to us as a fighter—for so he was, heaven's Prince-Knight in the arena, beset by the forces of evil. Some things are clear. In the first place, Jesus never sought to propitiate his enemies nor to soften the antagonism between them and himself. He made no concessions, offered no apologies. He laid bare their insincerity in the matter of the Sabbath, and justified his course on fundamental grounds. They attacked him on account of his high personal claims; he emphasized and repeated those claims until they were stirred to madness. We are indebted to these attacks for some of the sublimest declarations of Christ concerning himself. Either Jesus was the Son of God, or he bore false witness in the presence of his enemies; for no one can read these chapters and have any doubt that he claimed to be the Divine Son in the strongest and most unquestionable terms. But we must not think

of Jesus as simply fighting on the defensive. That was the lightest part of his fighting. He assumed the offensive and struck through the armor of his enemies, and his sword of truth pierced to their vital parts. "Ye have not his word abiding in you," "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you," "If another shall come in his own name, him will ye receive," "Ye neither know me, nor my Father," "Ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins" —so calmly but tremendously did he strike home to the center of their evil hearts. It is the picture of One greater than the angel of the Apocalypse standing with a flaming sword in his hand.

His Death in Christ's Program

BUT in the study of Christ's motives from the beginning of the period of hostility we have not yet touched upon the deepest and most significant fact. That fact, which is the key to our Lord's course during the succeeding part of his life, is this: *Jesus deliberately entered upon the determination to bring about his own death.* His death was a part, and a very essential part, of his program for the redemption of the world. It was necessary; I do not know why—no man can explain

why—it was necessary; but as he saw it, it was so. And his death was to be voluntary. It was inevitable but its inevitableness lay not in any human determination nor in any external circumstances, but in Christ's own deliberate purpose. He was to die, but not without his own consent. No necessity was upon his murderers to take his life; their acts were perfectly free, and the natural expression of their evil natures; but Jesus did not interfere with them; on the contrary he so shaped his course and so ordered the general situation as to make it easily possible for them to carry out their intentions. He saw to it that they should have an undisputed right of way and a clear track for their murderous purposes. He did not stop them, and he prevented others from stopping them. He could have prevented them from taking his life, but he could not prevent their desire to do it; and it was that deep wish to do evil in the heart of humanity that required to be eradicated if men were to be saved and the world redeemed; and in the perfect knowledge of the divine mind the death of Christ was necessary for the removal of that wish. The particular sin of the rulers in killing Christ was only one outward manifestation of the spirit of evil in their hearts and in the heart of

humanity; and Jesus was undertaking the ultimate casting out of that spirit, and that required his self-sacrifice. Now, one of the things which Jesus did to prevent any obstruction of the purposes of his enemies was to dissipate the popular enthusiasm for himself that had grown up. If his popularity such as it was after the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand had continued and spread, it would have been a danger such as the rulers would not have invoked by any violence to Jesus. They had a wholesome fear of the people, and at last they arrested Jesus at midnight and hurried through his so-called trial before the people, particularly the Galilæans who had come down to the passover, were aware what was being done. When Jesus at Capernaum, by his discourse on the bread of life, deliberately gave a deathblow to his popularity, that popular menace for his enemies as a serious contingency was removed. And when, following that, he began openly to attack the rulers, stirring up their hate against him by turning in the light of truth upon their wicked hearts and corrupt lives, the end was near at hand. These were Christ's first two moves for the accomplishment of his redeeming self-sacrifice; and these were swiftly and steadily followed by other

moves directed to the same end, until Calvary was an accomplished fact.

WHAT would have been the moral state of men if Christ had not come into the world? A negative hypothesis may sometimes be as illuminating as a positive one. Paul raised the question, "If Christ be not risen from the dead, what follows?" and pointed out some very startling but necessary implications of that supposition. Jesus himself raised the question, "What if I had not come?" He raised the question in relation to his enemies, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, if I had not done among them the works which no other man did, what would have been the effect upon them?" and to both of these suppositions his answer was, "They had not had sin." His coming, therefore, was to them an unspeakable calamity. To them it was not salvation but damnation. Jesus was clearly, though sadly, aware of this fact. He knew that while he would open heaven to many, he would deepen hell for others. We are looking upon a very cheerful aspect of the Christ's gospel when we hear him saying to his disciples that he was going

Christ as a Crisis-Maker

to prepare a place for them, and that where he was they would be also, and declaring that they knew whither he was going and the way also. But we are looking upon the dark side when we hear him saying to others: "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." Jesus declared himself to be the Light of the World; but he knew that for some his light would not mean a glorious day but a deepening night. Christ is life's great Crisis-Maker; to every soul to whom he is made known, he must be the supreme blessing or the supreme curse. "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see might be blind." Moral neutrality is made impossible for those upon whom Christ's light falls. He summons to a definite and permanent choice between the good and the evil. God as revealed by Christ cannot be regarded with indifference; he must be loved or hated. Where Christ is there can be no dim twilight; it must be either light or darkness. Men must choose between the day and the night. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil." Jesus was aware of the moral tragedy which his presence in the world was pro-

ducing. But it was not an inevitable tragedy. His mission was to bless, not to curse; he came not to destroy men's lives, but that they might have life more abundant; but his proffer of blessing and his offer of life involve their opposites for those who reject them. And so it happened as he passed among men, he divided them by the fundamental test of his own character and truth into two classes—upon the right hand of everlasting and chosen good, and on the left hand of everlasting and chosen evil.

JESUS spoke the parable of the lost sheep, because the Pharisees objected to his receiving and associating with sinners; and he spoke the parable of the good shepherd because the rulers had excommunicated the man whose eyes he had opened, on account of the witness which the man had borne to the worker of the miracle. The teaching at the heart of each of the parables is the same. Every human soul primarily belongs to Christ and has a claim, even to the utmost, upon his care and protection; and no one except the individual soul itself has the right or power to separate or shut it out from the kingdom of God, which is Christ's sheepfold; and Christ

God the Good Shepherd of the Universe

expresses the spirit of infinite pity and sacrifice which is in the heart of God, and which requires and prompts him to do the utmost possible for every being depending upon him, however insignificant or unworthy. Who were those "publicans and sinners" whom Jesus received and ate with? Whose sheep were they? Who had the shepherd's authority over them, the Pharisees or Christ? Who should decide what their rights and privileges were? And that one-time blind man—to whom did he belong, to Christ or to the rulers of the synagogue? And the church from which the rulers assumed to cut him off, whose church was it? Jesus simply set up the claim that all the sheep were his, the ninety-nine who remained in the sheepfold and the one that had wandered from it; that the publicans and sinners, and the blind man and all men, great and small, good and bad, were his, and that he was under obligation, to the limit of his divine power, to serve and save them. Christ represented God, and God must be, if he is to be God at all, the infinite Good Shepherd of the universe, never losing sight of, or lacking interest in, any soul anywhere in this world or in any other world. God's rule must be the rule of the shepherd; and this means that God

is pledged by his own nature to be a rescuer and defender and Saviour of those depending upon him. Just because Christ was God it was necessary for him to lay down his life for the sheep. Not to have done so would have been a refutation of all claims on his part that he was the Son of God. "This commandment have I received of my Father." No other kind of a commandment could have come from God. Redemption, salvation through sacrifice and suffering, was a necessity. When the occasion for it arose God's angels, who knew what the nature of God was, could not have felt any uncertainty concerning God's response. They might not have been able to conceive how God would go to the help of men, but it was certain that he would go in the most effective way, simply because it is laid upon infinite goodness to extend such help whenever needed. Our God has the heart of the good shepherd, and in that lies the hope of the world.

JESUS was very ready to declare himself to those to whom it was worth while, but not to those with whom the declaration would have been in vain. He spoke to

hearing ears, not to deaf ears. He took particular pains to find the man whom the Jews had cast out of the synagogue, and asked him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The man replied, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" That was an honest question with an honest purpose back of it, and Jesus replied to it plainly. "Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." And the man was true to his word, and instantly declared, "Lord, I believe"; and then as a man must who so believes, "he worshiped him." That was brief, direct, and simple. Christ can quickly come to an understanding with one who is willing to know and follow the truth. But when those Jews, hirelings and false shepherds, who had cast out the man whose eyes Jesus had opened, gathered about him, and asked with pretended eagerness, "How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly," his answer was very different. It was not worth while to tell such men anything about himself. He had told them much, and his great works, even his last miracle in giving sight to one born blind, had borne abundant witness concerning him. Plain, frank speech is for sincere people, and not for hypocrites. Jesus told them plainly not

Faith-Impotency

who he was, but that they were incapable of knowing who he was. Character determines such faith as is involved in believing in Christ as the Son of God. The head and the heart must unite in the production of that faith. That requires heart-faculty, heart-hearing and seeing, and those men did not have it. "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice." They and Jesus belonged to different worlds. "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world." It was a question of spirit-quality. Though one had come from the dead, if angels had appeared and declared to those men of pride and selfishness and carnal-heartedness that Jesus was the Son of God, it would have resulted in nothing. They were blind men, unaware of their blindness, talking about the things of the world of sight. They were stricken with faith-impotency, having its cause in an evil will. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself." They did not will to do the divine will, and so they could not know. Shall a man who will live in the gloom of a cavern ask to be shown the stars? Shall the mole ask to be convinced of the reality of the splendor of the sunrise?

Shall the evil of spirit expect to see God in the face of Jesus Christ—a vision possible only to the pure in heart?

The Courage of Jesus

THE courage of Jesus is not a simple problem. It was raised by his decision to go to Bethany on account of the death of Lazarus. He had retired beyond Jordan because of the hostility of the Jews at Jerusalem. But when the news came from Mary and Martha, he said, "Let us go into Judæa again." In dismay, his disciples said, "Master, the Jews sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" It seemed to them like courting death. "Let us also go," said one of them when his purpose was seen to be fixed, "that we may die with him." Jesus was a brave man; that goes as a matter of course. If the record revealed any cowardice in him, however the world might admire him for his wisdom and goodness, he could not hold his place as the ideal man. The ideal man, alike for men and women, must be brave. No thought of the divine nature of Christ could excuse any lack in this cardinal human quality. The more we believe he was divine, the more certain we are

of his courage. God is brave. And it is this very divine factor in his nature that makes Christ's courage a peculiar problem. If it were merely a human problem, it would be enough to know that he never quailed, never turned his back out of fear. But his courage was not only man's courage but God's courage. But how can God be brave? Is God exposed to any danger? And exempt from danger, what occasion can there be for courage? And so the problem of Christ's courage belongs to the total problem of his life. His danger was involved in this undertaking of the incarnation that was voluntary, and the fulfillment of the incarnation required that Jesus should expose himself to danger. His courage lay in the calm, unshrinking facing of that danger. His was the bravery of God, and the highest human bravery must be like God's, in that it consists, not in facing unavoidable danger, but in voluntarily incurring peril in the pursuit of the highest ends. Jesus knew his enemies could not take his life without his consent. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." That reveals the quality of Christ's courage. It was not the passive endurance of the unavoidable, but the deliberate choice of a way which he knew would end in his death.

That kind of courage springs out of the unconquerable spirit of duty that never turns aside nor back. And so, when his disciples, filled with fear for him and themselves, asked, "And goest thou thither again?" he said: "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." He was simply going forward in the light of duty, and to do that always requires the highest possible kind of courage.

The Higher Meaning of Events

WE are liable often to miss the most important meaning of an incident in the life of Christ by confining our attention to its details. The deeper significance of some incidents can be discovered not by microscopic but telescopic examination. Their importance lies in their connection with other things, as parts of a general plan. This is particularly the case with this miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus. In Christ's thought it had important relations with the general current of events which were moving very swiftly to his own death. The Bethany family were, unconsciously to themselves, brought

into connection with that current. They were occupied with their own personal sorrows; but as a matter of fact they were important actors in a great drama involving the interests of the world. To see this clearly we must go back to the story just preceding this, of the man born blind whose eyes Jesus opened. The disciples were querying why the man was born blind; and Jesus declared that it was "that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John 9. 1-4). Now, two things followed that miracle: first, many believed on him because of it (10. 42); second, great hostility was stirred up against him (10. 39). Because of this hostility he retired into Peræa, where he was when word of Lazarus' sickness came to him. Jesus was bringing things to a focus, and that focus was his cross. This blind man contributed to the influences which hastened the movement. The same is true of the sickness, death, and resurrection of Lazarus. Jesus saw it all in relation to himself and what he was about to do. "This sickness," he said when it was reported to him, "is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." In that lay its great meaning. And the two results which had followed the miracle of the opening

of the eyes of the man born blind followed also the raising of Lazarus. Many believed in him (11. 45) and intense hostility was created among the rulers (11. 46-54). Mary and Martha did not understand it; but Jesus knew when he called Lazarus forth from the sepulcher that it hastened the hour of his own burial. This enables us to understand Christ's actions throughout. First of all, we must put with the former words the statement of the fifth verse of this chapter, "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Everything must be interpreted in the light of that declaration. Jesus loved them, but he let Lazarus die, and he did not come to them until the brother had been four days in the sepulcher—which shows us that Christ's love was intelligent and farseeing. Enlightened love is never simply of the present tense. Intelligent love works for the ultimate, not simply immediate, good. It can sometimes be stern and apparently cruel in its denials and in its inflictions, standing by and seeing its object suffer when all the impulses of sympathy demand the giving of relief. And love of the noblest sort, that sees the farthest off, is always more than a merely individual love. It will be governed by general interests, and

will let its personal objects suffer when it is necessary for the good of the many. The mother loves her son, but she consents that he shall die, if need be, for his country. Love that has not this breadth and strength and steadiness is a weak sentiment, and quite as likely to harm its objects as to do them good. If Jesus had shown merely a present-tense love for the Bethany family, he might have saved them from much suffering, but in so doing he would have denied them the greater vision of his glory, and would have put them out of connection with his own highest purposes.

The Human Interest in the Raising of Lazarus

THE intelligent student of history pauses over certain events to reflect upon the far-reaching influence which they have exercised over the life of humanity. In the records of Christ's life we are frequently made to so pause. The crucifixion and the resurrection are events so incomparably great that we cannot conceive what the course and character of history would have been if they had not taken place. Only we are sure that the world would be a totally different world if the power of those two events, which happened

within the compass of a fateful period of about forty hours, had not been laid upon it. Leaving these major events out of account, however, there are some other incidents in the life of Jesus the influence of which we are unable to measure. The raising of Lazarus from death is possibly the greatest of these. The magnitude of it grows upon us the more we consider it. It is not the power of the miracle itself that gives to the event such singular importance and interest. Essentially the same power was exercised in at least three previous cases. The raising of Lazarus stands in such unusual settings, is so peculiarly and richly saturated with human sentiments and sympathies, and is so closely connected with the tragedy which crowned and completed the work of Christ, as to clothe it with peculiar significance. It is true to general experience to say that, while the resurrection of Christ himself lies, and must forever lie, at the foundation of the world's best and most enduring hope for a life to come, the raising of Lazarus, taking the event in all its circumstances and in the warm and luminous atmosphere in which it appears, comes home to our human hearts, with their deep cravings for assurance and comfort, with more immedi-

ate satisfying and healing power than even the glorious triumph of Jesus when he arose from the dead on the morning of the third day. It is easy to explain this. At Bethany at the sepulcher of Lazarus Jesus stood in the midst of vital needs and dealt with human hearts, under the heaviest and sorest pressure of sorrow, where the problems of death and the life beyond death were not academic or philosophic questions, but questions which soon or late all of us ask through whitened lips and blinding tears. The Christ with his own eyes filled with tears of pitying sympathy for those who sorrowed and who were feeling through the dark for a supporting hand, who stood before the Bethany sepulcher and declared himself to be the resurrection and the life, brings to us help when we feel so deeply that we can think but little, and that help saves us from despair.

AT the raising of Lazarus Jesus drew nearest to human sorrow; at the supper at Bethany he drew nearest to human love. In both of these cases it is very important that we should recognize that he represented God. At first we may be impressed chiefly with his human qualities, for

he bore himself on both occasions so simply and entered so naturally and sympathetically into the feelings of those chiefly concerned that he might seem to us to be merely a large-hearted and tender-souled brother-man. And so he was. But we must not forget that he was also, perhaps never more fully, revealing God to us in those two hours so rich in human sentiment. We mistake in attributing the tenderness and sympathy of Jesus merely to his human nature, referring only his supernatural wisdom and power to his divine nature. But we are quite in the habit of so doing, as if tenderness and sympathy were not divine qualities. Is the human heart tenderer than the heart of God, that we should think of Christ the man as being touched by our troubles, and of Christ the God as the worker of miracles? Is not God's love as transcendently supernatural as his wisdom and his power? As a matter of fact the greatest thing in Christ's revelation of the Father was the manifestation of his love. Consequently, both at the raising of Lazarus and the supper at Bethany, Jesus appears not simply in his human but in his divine character also. The tremendous miracle by which the dead was made alive was joined with the tears of the divine-human sympathizer; and

Jesus Accepting Love's Tribute

at the supper when Mary anointed his feet with the precious ointment, and poured out the wealth of her heart as an offering of gratitude, the sense and evidence of that mighty miracle were there in the person of Lazarus, for John is particular to tell us that "Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him." There was this difference between the two occasions: in the first Jesus was the giver of sympathy and affection, while in the second he was the object and receiver of love's expression. Mary's sacrifice to sentiment was grateful to him. He not only delighted to love but also in being loved. This also is divine. The heart of God pours out its love with unmeasured lavishness upon us, but it also yearns for and delights in our love in return. And this is the high meaning of Christ's attitude toward Mary breaking the sweet and costly spikenard over his feet. It was not simply that the sacrifice was good for the satisfaction of Mary's own heart, but it was good because it brought joy to the heart of Jesus also.

The Fame of Love

IN Mark's account of Mary's anointing of Jesus's feet there is a statement that should be put at the front of its study. He tells us that Jesus declared, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." This prediction has been richly fulfilled, for this story of Mary is one of the most familiar and fascinating stories of the Bible, and it is doubtful whether any circumstance in the gospel history, aside from those things which belong to the highest features of Christ's own experiences, has entered as deeply into the thought and feeling of the world as this. What Mary did secured for her an everlasting fame. No master of war who conquered for himself a throne ever gained so universal and enviable a glory as did this humble woman of Bethany. She outranks scholars, and philosophers, and soldiers, and discoverers, and inventors. "The greatest of these is love." In God's sight the supreme achievements are the achievements of love. Love represents life at its highest, and its highest register stands above everything else. Christ himself illustrates this law; for just as he bestowed upon Mary for her deed of love a world-wide fame, so God the Father,

because Jesus expressed his love in unequaled sacrifice, "gave him a name that is above every name." Mary was not dreaming of fame; and Jesus "made himself of no reputation." But exaltation in the kingdom of God always springs out of self-forgetfulness. But some one, viewing it from the practical point of view, may say Mary is not entitled to this distinction. "Of what value to the world has her act been? Columbus gave to humanity a new hemisphere, and other men by great discoveries and inventions have multiplied the wealth of the world. But what value has accrued to the world from Mary's deed?" That is the money-changer's question, and that is his conception of value. To him flowers would have no value except for the fact that there are people enough who appreciate them to make them marketable. But the money-changer's question also reveals his blindness. He fails to see that commercial value itself is dependent upon certain higher qualities which are not matters of commerce. Man's lower life is made fruitful by the enrichment of his higher life. The great inventions and discoveries have all been made where the influence of Christ's gospel of love has been most fully felt. A world without love would be a world

without worth. Therefore when Mary there in Bethany did a thing that for all these centuries has been an inspiration to millions of lives in all gentleness and self-forgetfulness and sacrifice, filling life with the perfume of the holiest and finest sentiments, she helped to lift humanity to a higher range of value. It would be as foolish to ignore the rain and the dew and the sunshine, in discussing the fruits of the fields, as to forget such influence as that which went out from Mary in considering the material values of the world.

Humility Belongs to Greatness

PROBABLY the most important lesson which Jesus taught his disciples throughout his ministry was that of humility in service illustrated by his washing of their feet. Pride, an overestimate of one's own importance, the desire to be exalted above others, and the consequent unwillingness to render any service of a menial or commonplace character, is a vulgar vice. No fine spiritual growth can be had out of such a soil. It is a vulgar vice in anyone; but some people might be supposed to be but little exposed to its temptations. To one having nothing in the way of ability or possession or position to dis-

tinguish him from ordinary men, humility would appear proper and natural, and is certainly the only fitting thing in those who rank below the average. For an ordinary or an inferior person to exalt himself is felt to be not only reprehensible but absurd. But the difficulty lies with those who are superior to their fellows in endowments and opportunities. And it is greatest with the greatest; and the virtue of humility as Jesus conceived it and exemplified it is, perhaps, the virtue most difficult of attainment by the highest type of people, and it is, if attained, the crown of their nobleness. The disciples were in process of climbing up out of this worldly vice. They were frequently discussing the question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Two of them pushed their claims for the chief positions in that kingdom at the right hand of Christ, and even in the solemnity of the Last Supper they still contended over the problem. It is notable that Jesus did not denounce their selfish pride. Better than that, and we may profit by his example, he set up a little child as an example of simple humility; in the second case he declared to them that places of honor in the kingdom could not be arbitrarily granted; and in the third instance he illustrated

by an act of lowliest service on his own part the fact that the highest must be willing to stoop the lowest. These eleven men were to be preëminently great as the first teachers and leaders of the church. Their spirit needed to be lifted to the level of their high office and opportunity. Jesus undertook to show them that simply because they were called to great place in the kingdom they must rise above selfish pride. He, the greatest, and whose greatness would grow upon them in the coming years, and whom even then they gladly called their master, did not regard it as inconsistent with his greatness to minister to them as a menial servant. Just because he was the Son of God it was necessary for him to do that; for God could not be God—great above the greatness of all others—without being the infinite servant of even the lowest and weakest creatures in the universe.

THE disciples in their selfish strife were stupid and blind. There can be no doubt that they saw and confessed that a little later with great shame. They did not understand. They were associated with great hours and did not know their greatness. They

misconceived Christ, they did not know what kind of a kingdom he was to establish. And they did not understand that he was really about to be put to death; and even had they known that, they would not have understood the meaning of his death. They were blundering among great things without knowing it. If they had known, if they had understood, they would have preferred to have their tongues cut out rather than that they should have talked and quarreled about rank and office in such a presence. But that is the trouble with all selfishness—it is blind and stupid. Any man now who is occupied with matters of merely personal ambition is offending against the fitness of things just as much as the disciples did. Every hour is great and sacred, and selfishness is always incongruous. In the presence of life's high callings and the movements and summons of God in the world, it must be an amazing thing to the angels to see men clamoring and contending with each other about riches and position and power. If in the midst of this world-wrangle the scales should suddenly fall from men's eyes, and they should see the supreme realities, they would be shamed at their own pettiness. The self-seeker is always blundering blindly among great things. But

The Stupidity of Self-Seeking

Jesus was exceedingly patient with his blundering disciples. He did not reprove them for the incongruity of their conduct—they were not yet able to appreciate that. He gave them object lessons, and he instructed them in the nature of true greatness. He set a little child in their midst (Luke 9. 47) and said, "He that is least among you all, the same shall be great." Consider the tenderness and yet the thoroughness with which he dealt with the request of John and James that they might sit the one upon his right hand and the other upon his left (Mark 10. 38-42). The other disciples were much displeased at these two brothers—selfish people usually are angered at the attempts of other selfish people. But Jesus was not angered. And in the last case when Jesus was so near to his cross, when the old quarrel of his disciples again intruded itself, he dealt with it with infinite calm and patience. He took upon him the office of the most menial servant and washed their feet, that he might teach them in a way never to be forgotten that greatness consists in serving rather than in being served. And Jesus dealt patiently with his disciples because he knew they did not understand, and because he knew they were moving in the direction of right

understanding. They were coming out of ignorance and blindness, and he dealt with them as a wise teacher with ignorant pupils. The main thing was that they were teachable, and not, like the scribes and the Pharisees, perversely blind because unwilling to know the truth. And God still has marvelous patience with the ignorance of men.

IN what mood did Jesus come to that upper chamber in Jerusalem to keep the passover with his disciples? First of all, he was intensely eager. "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." He knew what that night and the day beyond held for him, but he approached the hour not only without reluctance, but with glad anticipations. We must think of him on that night with all the elements of his nature quickened and his faculties working in the fullness of their power. His consciousness was in full illumination and all the channels of his mind and heart were throbbing at full tide. And yet there was no excitement, no feverishness, no haste, no confusion, no tumult. His powers were acting at their full capacity, but with calmness, with certainty and in perfect

Christ's Mood at the Last Supper

equipoise, like the great forces which rule the worlds. He was fully aware of himself, knew who he was, whence he came, the meaning and purpose of his life, and that he was the central figure in a world-drama the climax of which was at hand, a climax to which all history through many thousands of years had been moving. And yet he was not self-absorbed. Simply because he knew himself so perfectly he understood his relations and obligations to others. He had no anxiety for himself, for the way before him was clear. Nothing was to happen to him contrary to his own plan. He was to suffer, but he had so chosen, and he knew the purpose of his suffering. But he felt the full meaning and power of what was about to take place. His mood rose to the level of the sublime situation. He knew this passover supper would be an immortal occasion, that its minutest details would have high interest for all the coming ages, and that the centuries would be whispering galleries for repeating every word which he would utter. Nevertheless, how simply and naturally did he proceed! Conscious of the highest, he stooped to the lowest; with the vision of far-off ages in his mind, he gave closest attention to the demands of the passing hour; aware

that he was come from God, that he was to return to God, and that he was about to bring deliverance and hope to a ruined world, he girded himself with a towel and washed his disciples' feet.

JESUS represented himself as sustaining two kinds of relations to his followers—the external and the vital. For instance, in the parable of the good shepherd he is represented in an external relation. As shepherd he protects and provides and leads. So, also, when he declares himself to be the door, and similarly, though not so strictly, when he announces himself to be the true light; but when he calls himself the vine, he implies deep vital relations with the souls of believers. And these represent his most important relations. His great mission is to give men abundant life. But he is the source of life, and we can only receive life by union with him. And we cannot have the advantages of external relations with him unless we enter first into the vital relations. His sheep, who enter the sheepfold through him as the door, and who enjoy his shepherding, must, first of all, be his own and know his voice, and that implies an inner life-relation

The Vital Relations of Christ

with him; and he can only be the light to those who have in them his life. We should grasp the general truth that the perfection of life requires that it be in right relations. A branch, however delicately fashioned and beautiful it may be, is really meaningless and worthless if disconnected from the vine. An amputated arm, however perfectly molded, is repulsive, because out of its relations. A door or a window has meaning only in connection with a house. Nothing is perfect in itself, but only in its proper settings with the whole of things. It is here that many people make a fundamental mistake concerning themselves. They fancy that their lives can be taken out of the relations God intended them to hold with himself and with their fellow men and still have value and perfection. As well talk of the eye removed from its socket, or the hand severed from the arm and still having value and perfection, as of a life taken out of its intended and essential relations. Things out of their places are worthless because they can serve no good purpose except in their proper places.

FRUIT-BEARING is the purpose of the branch. It may be graceful and ornamental, but that is secondary. Its business, its end, is fruit-bearing. And Jesus tells us that is the purpose of human life. God intends the human soul to produce spiritual fruits, that is, spiritual values. He connects the soul with his own life in order that it may bear fruit. And fruit is the contribution which the vine makes to others. The vine does not consume its own fruit. Its fruit is the overplus of its vitality, its generous contribution to the needs, the values, and the happiness of the world. If the unconscious processes and workings of the vine and its branches could become conscious, they would be saying through all the season, "Let us work unceasingly and with the utmost care, that in autumn we may present the greatest amount and the sweetest possible quality of fruit to gladden the hearts of men." And that is the message of the vine to us. When we shrink our thought down to the desire simply to produce fruit for self-consumption we have missed the thought of God concerning us entirely. It is a crude and inelegant illustration to use, but the meanness of a selfish life merits inelegant illustration, and so I may be pardoned for saying that a

Spiritual Fruit-Bearing the Purpose of Life

man who seeks to bear fruit for himself and not for others is like a cow that "short circuits" her milk supply, and becomes the direct consumer of all she produces. Jesus distinctly told his disciples that they could not bear fruit except they should abide in him. The vine fills the branch with life and sends up into it all the elements necessary for fruit-making. So the vital spiritual forces which alone can produce the fruits of the Spirit in our lives must come from Christ. We are dependent upon him. But may we not look at the figure from the other point of view, and say that Christ depends upon us for producing fruit? The vine does not bear fruit directly of itself, but through the branches. If the branches refuse to yield themselves to fruit-bearing, then the vine is defeated in its purpose. So God in this world must work through men and women, is dependent upon them in carrying out his purposes and desires, and if they refuse to cooperate with him they may defeat his plans. The life of God is seeking to come to realization and fruition in the life of every human being, just as the life of the vine is trying to come to fruitage in the branches. But we may deliberately stop the currents of the divine life in us and so prevent God from expressing him-

self in us. This should enable us to see what Jesus meant when he said, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." God is always glorified when he is revealed; and in bearing spiritual fruit we are simply permitting God to express himself through us.

THE feeling grows upon us that Jesus spoke with the confidence of one who was familiar with the universe. It was not the confidence of scientific knowledge, but personal and intimate familiarity. He speaks to us as one might who has so traveled and lived in all lands that the whole world has become his fatherland. Jesus was at home in the universe, and there were no realms in it to which he was a stranger. His "Father's house" was as vast as space, but he knew all its abiding places, its unnumbered and spacious mansions. He did not clothe the unseen world and the future life with any mystery. He never spoke of them with bated breath. They were no more mysterious than the natural world and the present life. Why should anyone be troubled in heart concerning them? Certainly God will make ample provision for his children; no one need fear lest there should be no room

Immortality No Problem with Christ

for him somewhere when this poor structure of the sense-life goes to pieces. Does not God know that it is but a temporary tent, and will he not have ready a permanent dwelling in due time? The problem of immortality? There was no such problem for Jesus, and there should be no such problem for those who believe in God. The knowledge of God should dissolve all doubt or fear represented by that problem to the unbelieving mind. God is the God of life, not the God of death. Those who are capable of knowing him and believing in him can never die, for the capacity for such knowledge and belief is the credentials and seal of immortality, God's pledge of eternal care. Jesus sought to quiet the troubled hearts of the disciples by showing them the simplicity of faith. They were troubled because Jesus was to go away from them. Were they to be like a little child filled with fear because its mother disappears for a moment behind the door leading into another room? Does not God's Fatherhood stand for something permanent? Does not continued care for this world and the future world belong to that Fatherhood? Is it necessary to reason or question about a matter so certain? Is it not safe to take something for granted with God?

IF Jesus had only explained the Trinity!" But he did not, and probably for two reasons; that it was a matter beyond our understanding, and therefore incapable of explanation, and because such explanation is not necessary. Would God be more or better in relation to our spiritual lives if we knew just how the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit stand related to each other? Are we conscious of any moral need which that knowledge would satisfy? The mission of Jesus was to declare and manifest God to the extent to which men could understand and that their needs required, not to explain God as a "mystery" in any way. Certain simple things concerning God are vitally important: the fact that he is a Spirit, his Fatherhood, his holiness and goodness, his care for us, his providence, his life. These things the life of our souls requires for its nourishing. Jesus declared himself to be the Son of God. He did not explain this, probably could not have explained it to men. But, somehow, we do not know how, seeing and knowing him, we know the Father also; and, somehow, he has put us in living touch with God. And he promised that God would come to men in a more intimate, penetrating, and illuminating way; and God, thus reveal-

Jesus and the Trinity

ing and imparting himself, was to be known as the Holy Spirit. Again no explanation; but God has so come to men, imparting life and light and power, working inward transformation, stimulating all the spiritual faculties, opening the eyes of the heart, quickening its love and strengthening its faith. It is all God—God seeking to enter into our lives as the Father, as the Son, as the Holy Ghost. And trying to construe it, men coined for themselves the word "Trinity," and forthwith became involved in endless controversy over the word, anathematized and imprisoned and killed each other on account of a mystery which no one has ever been able to explain, and for which no solution has even been necessary. In the meanwhile the great fact of the divine Fatherhood has been shining down upon human hearts with gracious light and warmth; Christ has been the supreme Friend and Saviour of millions of people; and the influence of the Holy Spirit has been like a heavenly wind blowing over all the fields of life, causing them to break into beauteous and fragrant bloom.

DID Jesus understand what the character of Judas was? At the end we know he did; but how long had he known? A year before the end he had said, speaking of Judas, "One of you is a devil." When did he begin to know? And how long had Judas been a devil? I believe Jesus understood him perfectly when he called him to be an apostle, and that he knew him at that time as a man capable of the wickedness of the final treachery and betrayal. Why, in that case, did Jesus choose him? I answer, though the answer may startle the reader, he chose him for the very purpose of the betrayal. Was Judas, on this supposition, merely a blind instrument of fate, irresponsible and involuntary? By no means. We have no hesitancy in believing that God chooses good men, because he knows their fitness for it, to do great and good deeds, bringing to them the highest honor. Such men, in the strategy of Providence, are selected and set at crisis-points where the highest moral elements are required. But being so divinely stationed on the field of the world, what they do is done in absolute freedom, and we do not think of them as the unconscious and involuntary agents of fate. Why may we not believe, in this same system of providential strategy,

Judas and Divine Strategy

that God so sets the wickedness of men as to employ it in working out the ultimate purposes of good? In the earthly life of Christ God came into conflict with the moral evil of the world, and he used the forces of that world for its own defeat. In the accomplishment of the world's redemption, as we are able to interpret the record, it was necessary for God's love and holiness to bring the wickedness of the human heart to a culmination and crisis. It was necessary to permit human hate of God to do its worst in order that at last that hate might be cured. That worst, that culmination of the malevolence of sin, was reached in the sacrifice of Christ. Christ deliberately chose to let the evil in men's hearts have its way with him, and he so adjusted himself to that evil that it might have the very opportunity which it desired. Judas was simply a representative of the wicked spirit of a wicked world. He was the world's fittest agent for the betrayal of the Son of God. Simply because of that preëminence, and as a part of the deep plan of giving the world a chance to do its worst, Jesus took Judas into such relations with himself as to give him the opportunity for the treachery, the spirit of which was more deeply latent, perhaps, in his heart

than in any other human soul. The deepest curse of Judas lay in having that opportunity given him.

JUDAS and Peter—the Betrayer and the Denier—do they not deserve to be pilloried and classified together? No; for Jesus, who knew the hearts of the two men, did not put them in the same class. What Judas did was the expression of his chosen and settled wickedness; what Peter did was the result of his infirmities, his temperamental weakness. The betrayal was deliberate moral suicide; the denial was a moral accident resulting in a painful but not a fatal hurt. For Judas there was no recovery or hope; for Peter there was cure and restoration to health of soul. For Judas there was nothing but remorse, the sorrow of the world that worketh death; for Peter there was godly sorrow, repentance issuing in salvation and life. I have expressed above the belief that Jesus chose Judas for the very purpose of the betrayal, as a part of his own voluntary self-sacrifice, and Jesus made no mistakes in his choices. Certainly, Judas was not made wicked that he might betray his Master, and as certainly he

Peter and Judas

was not denied any opportunity for such change of heart as would have saved him from the betrayal. The deep and dark secret of his inner life is not explained to us. He was a mature man when he entered the circle of the disciples, and we must believe that Jesus understood him at the beginning as he understood others. As he saw in Peter elements of character that would come to rocklike strength, and in Nathanael the spirit of an Israelite in whom was no guile, he also, when he first looked into the eyes of Judas, saw the soul of a traitor already lost to moral return. Jesus also understood the weaknesses of Peter. Three times he severely rebuked him. But he also understood his strength, and praised him. Not so in the case of Judas. Jesus spoke no word that indicated hope for him. With Judas in mind, months before the actual betrayal, he had said, "One of you is a devil." And with him again in mind, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born." Peter he rebuked, but he had confidence in his outcome. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren." And the look which Jesus turned upon Peter after the denial was not a look of hopeless abandonment but of

sorrowful love. But there was no word of prayer for Judas, and Jesus interposed no protest against his treachery; but, on the other hand, viewing his act as morally inevitable, he said to him, "That thou doest, do quickly." Jesus simply accepted Judas as the agent and exponent of the evil of the world and used him as he also used the high priest and Pontius Pilate.

THROUGHOUT the trial the Prisoner holds the position of commanding interest. We are impressed with the dignity and calmness of his bearing. There is not the slightest sign of fear manifested by him at any moment. He is the only thoroughly self-possessed one that we see through those hours of stress and tumult. It grows upon us as we follow him that he was really the master rather than the victim of the circumstances in which he was placed. He was the only one of all who took part in the proceedings of that day who knew the meaning of what was being done. To him it was perfectly clear. And this remarkable thing appears as the tragedy unfolds, that Jesus was not seeking to escape from the hands of his enemies,

The Self-Surrender of Christ

but, rather, seeking to let them have their way. They had determined upon his death, and he had chosen to die. The motive of his enemies in desiring to put him to death was to gratify their hate, while his motive in desiring to die was to make an atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world. His death was voluntary. He had previously declared that no man had power to take his life from him, that he had power to lay it down and power to take it again. He had made it clear to the officers who came to arrest him that they could not take him against his will. When that was done he surrendered himself into their hands. And before the Sanhedrin he had made no defense, but both by his answers and by his silence had made more certain his condemnation. He was not seeking to escape; but on the contrary he was directing everything to the end that he should not escape.

Pilate

PILATE was a Roman, and so, as to religion, a heathen. But there were noble Romans. Of one such Jesus had said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Luke 7. 9). The Roman centurion, Cornelius, was another such (Acts 10. 1), and two of the noble type appear in connection

with Paul (Acts 23. 18; 27. 43). And Roman history tells us of many examples of men of lofty character, just, and honorable, and brave. But Pilate was not a Roman of the noble sort. Neither can we justly regard him as belonging to the meanest sort. He was, perhaps, simply an average type of the Roman courtier and politician of his day, having fear only of the emperor at Rome, greedy of gain, and guided always by self-interest, yet when these factors were not involved having something of the dignity of the traditional Roman character. "Suffered under Pontius Pilate." That clause in the universal creed of Christendom passes the name of the Roman governor down to eternal infamy. When he consented to the death of Christ that day he thought it an incident that would soon be forgotten, little dreaming that this was the one act by which he would be known to future ages, and that the curse of having ordered the crucifixion of the one sinless Man who has ever lived in this world would cling to him to the end of time. He sat in judgment upon Jesus; the heavens sat in judgment upon him. He was weak and he was wicked. He entered upon the great trial in a spirit of petulancy; he was vacillating, and moved by a tortuous in-

stead of a straight line; he stood in awe of the dignity of the great Prisoner, yet resented his silence; seven times he pronounced Jesus innocent, yet he ordered him to be cruelly scourged, permitted him to be grossly maltreated, and finally surrendered him to be crucified. He used Jesus in his small play of politics by sending him to Herod, permitted his convictions as a judge to be drowned by the bellowing of the mob, and quailed like a coward before the threat that his own conduct would be impeached at Rome. He washed his hands in theatrical protestation of innocence of the blood of a Man whom he was about surrendering like a lamb to the wolves, and sought to put the entire responsibility for the murder upon a mob which his soldiers could have swept from the court in five minutes.

Reticence Before the Cross

THE external features of the death of Christ are matters for silent and sorrowful remembrance rather than harrowing description or representation. At times, for the chastening of our pride and the deepening of our gratitude, it is well for us to enter into our closets and with bowed heads read over the sad story of the heavy hours from the mid-

night when Jesus was betrayed into the hands of his enemies to the waning afternoon when his pierced body was laid in Joseph's tomb. We know, we know, and love can never forget, how cruelly he suffered, through what agony he came to the gates of death. But it is not a subject for rhetoric. Words on this sacred and heart-bowing sorrow of the world unless few and very simple are irreverent and offensive. The orator when he approaches this subject should stay the torrent of his speech and lay his fingers upon his lips. And the portrayals of art should also be in the spirit of grieved and humbled reticence. I have the feeling that it were better if nine tenths of the pictures of the crucifixion were wiped out. A mind sensitive to the deepest and holiest meanings of Calvary cannot fail to be wounded in visiting the churches and galleries of Italy by seeing everywhere representations of the suffering Christ, the ghastly material details of the crime of the ages so grossly displayed as to make it commonplace. A few great pictures of the cross we need, pictures painted by artists upon whom came the hush of a solemn vision, and who wrought in tears and trembling prayer. The others could well be spared. We cannot afford to have the cross made a matter

of vulgar show by a realism that obscures its highest meanings by appeals to the physical senses. This realism has been a pernicious thing as embodied in forms of worship. The congregational singing of the realistic songs is a violence to the soul of all true devotion. The feeling awakened by such songs harks back to the savage life. We must be instructed by the Scriptures. The stark and dreadful facts are in the gospel story, but they are not dwelt upon for harrowing effect upon the feelings. And while in the epistles the death of Christ is a central fact, there is no slightest appeal to the physical horrors associated with it. The appeal is to something deeper than that. We may truly say concerning the cross, "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." We must discern the eternal meanings of Christ's death.

FAITH dawned on the disciples as the sun dawned on the world that morning. First the empty sepulcher, discovered by the women who came with the loving purpose to complete the embalming of the body of their beloved Friend. To them it seemed only

added sorrow, for they had taken him away—his enemies, no doubt—and they knew not where they had laid him. Then came John and Peter, eagerly, and no doubt with awakened recollections of Christ's words concerning his rising again, and looked into the sepulcher and observed evidences in the grave-clothes as they lay that his removal had not been by enemies, and they knew it had not been by his friends. Then came the women again, and to them appeared the angels; and some of these carried the word to the disciples. But to Mary Magdalene, before she left the sepulcher, Jesus himself appeared; and after that to one, and to two, and to ten, and then to the eleven, and finally to many, Jesus revealed himself. The sun was up, the day of faith was fully come. But Jesus seems to have left behind him in the sepulcher mute but most significant and instructive witnesses not only to the fact of his resurrection but also to the nature of the new life upon which he had entered. I refer to the graveclothes in which his body had been wrapped, and which Peter found lying on the stone couch where the body of Jesus had been placed, not unwound and folded together, but apparently in the position they held when wrapped about the sacred form. We must

Mute Witness

remember that Oriental graveclothes were really bands of linen with which the body was wrapped round and round from head to foot. Out of that wrapping Jesus came not by unwrapping the bands, but by simply passing out of them without disturbing them—vanishing, and leaving the wrappings with nothing to inclose. There lay the napkin with which his head had been wrapped about, in the hollowed space of the stone head-rest, apart by itself. When Peter and John (for it seems very certain that John also entered the sepulcher) saw the clothes thus lying still folded but enfolding nothing, "they believed" (verse 8). They believed that he was risen, not stolen away; for no one could have removed his body from their wrappings without unwinding the bands. To the disciples, looking upon that silent sign, it became evident that the quickened body of Jesus had simply vanished, leaving the clothes as they were behind. I have here stated an interpretation which came to me as a revelation in the reading of the chapter "The Witness of the Graveclothes," in the book, The Risen Lord, by Rev. H. L. Latham, head master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and author of Pastor Pastorum. Students of the gospel should read both of these books.

WE must not fail to feel and appreciate what may be called the atmosphere of Christ's resurrection. John's statement that Mary Magdalene came to the sepulcher "when it was yet dark" applies also to the moral condition that prevailed. In the thought of the world regarding the unseen and immortal life "it was yet dark." It was a night air that enveloped the souls of men, and the stars of hope in the spiritual skies were not lustrous, but pale. Jesus came back to a world confused with many doubts, weary and discouraged with groping after the light, to a humanity filled with troubled dreams concerning death and the things beyond death. But he did not return with any expectation that he could suddenly awaken the sleeping and dreaming world to a full consciousness of the reality and certainty of the eternal life. Slowly the awakening would take place, for the morning of the resurrection was the dawn of a new and great day of hope and faith for humanity. We asked concerning the mood of Jesus on the night of the Last Supper when he was consciously drawing near to the cross and the grave. We may now ask in what mood did he return from behind the gates of death and come again into relations with human life. We are

The Atmosphere of the Resurrection

impressed with the simplicity of his return. He did not make his rising a spectacle. Not with the sound of heavenly trumpets, but very quietly and simply did he return. He reintroduced himself to his friends by no impressive manifestations of power and glory, but in a way that made his return a tender and beautiful surprise. His first word was a human name uttered with the familiar accent of the former days. He came back to link his new life with the old life of journeyings and weariness and tenderness and labor and trust and love, and to link the immortal life which he represented with the common life of trial, of burden-bearing, of suffering, of temptation and struggle. The risen Christ came back to assure men and women that his love was unchanged, and that he was still to be their great and mighty Friend. It is this atmosphere of warm human interest, this mood of the risen Saviour, which gives enduring power to the resurrection day. In the utterance of Mary's name Jesus, in fact, spoke the name of everyone who loves him and needs him; and when he said to Mary, "Go to my brethren," he announced that he had returned to enter into an enduring bond of brotherhood with us all. This is the great thing in Christ's resurrection.

WE linger with deep and tender heart-curiosity over the incidents of the forty days between Christ's resurrection and his ascension; for it is our hearts rather than our intellects that are wondering and questioning what self-revelation he would make during those days. We are impressed first of all by the direction which his thoughts took. He had passed through the mighty ordeal of Calvary, a culmination point to which he had known at least through the last year, if not throughout his entire ministry, his way would lead. He had gone behind the curtains of death and, rising, had appeared again among men. To Calvary and to this rising again he had pointed forward for months eagerly and expectantly as the consummation of his work in the world. But when he stood on the other side of these events we are surprised to find that he scarcely alluded to them. The reminiscent scars in his hands and his side he exhibited half apologetically and regretfully as a rebuke to reluctant faith, and to the two disciples with whom he walked to Emmaus he spoke of his death as a necessary fulfillment of all that the prophets had spoken; but beyond this he spoke no word concerning his sufferings, and nothing whatever concerning the

The Prophetic Mood of the Risen Christ

mysteries of the unseen world from which he had returned. With Moses and Elijah on the Mount of his Transfiguration, he talked of his approaching death, for his face was then definitely set toward it; but when that death was accomplished he did not turn back to it as the subject of chief interest. Indeed, we perceive that immediately preceding his death his thoughts were occupied with things lying far beyond it. In his discourses and in his great prayer on the night before his passion we are made aware that he was looking through his sufferings and death to a far range of things in the future. As he drew near to the cross it melted into the expanding vision of the coming ages, and in establishing the holy sacrament by which his sacrifice was to be kept in remembrance he threw about the dark tragedy a softened atmosphere of sublime mysticism. But the Christ after the resurrection had not the backward but the forward look. He was thinking of the greater things to come. There were greater revelations of truth to be made; the dispensation of the Spirit shortly to be ushered in was to be an era of new and higher power; his gospel was to be preached to all nations as a universal evangel; and at the end of the ages he was to come again for final judg-

ment and for universal dominion. The mood of the risen Christ was not reminiscent but prophetic.

AS through his entire ministry, so during the forty days of his tarrying after his resurrection, Christ's interest in his disciples was personal. He had chosen his disciples separately, one by one, with clear recognition of their personal qualities and peculiarities. Individualism characterized the apostleship. It was a personal following, a personal service, a personal mastership. The disciples did not approach Jesus through committees, they had no occasion to hold caucuses, and they were not governed by any "unit rule." Each man had free access to the Master and required the mediation of no one. Each one's fealty was direct, and each one rendered a free man's service in a natural expression of his own personality. No one of the Twelve was set up as a pattern. Jesus never said, "Consider John or consider Peter." There is no composite apostolic character. In the company gathered with Jesus for the Last Supper we see twelve men whom association with their great Teacher had not reduced into

Personal Dealings of Jesus with Disciples

uniformity. Uniformity belongs to the lower ranges of life, not to the highest. Discipleship did not call for the melting down of personality and the recasting of the life in a fixed mold. The John who entered Christ's service was still John at the end, and the final Peter was still Peter; only at the end there were a nobler John and a nobler Peter; but their new character was built upon the old foundations and about the original framework of their personalities. Consequently, Jesus never dealt with his disciples as a company but as individuals. As he called them at the beginning each one by his own name and laid his hand of ordination upon each head separately, so throughout and at the end he dealt with them independently. We particularly feel this personal touch and interest during those post-resurrection days. He came back to his disciples to say to each one just the words which his own needs demanded. They were bound together by common bonds of sympathy and sorrow and disappointment; nevertheless, in a deep sense each one stood alone as they began to recover themselves after the shock of the day of the crucifixion. Each one had his personal problems, each one was under the necessity of adjusting himself to the new situation,

each one needed to find a new basis for his faith and to make a new adjustment of his life to Jesus. Jesus returned to meet these personal requirements and to establish vital and permanent relations with each of his followers.

TWO illustrations of Christ's personal interest in his disciples following his resurrection are peculiarly interesting. The first is the case of Thomas. Thomas was slow to believe the report that Jesus had risen. It was not that he was not anxious to believe it, it was simply that he was not convinced by the testimony; and it was not that his was a more logical type of mind than that of the others; perhaps the reverse was the case. Doubt is not necessarily logical; skepticism is not necessarily scientific. Credulity and skepticism may be equally blind and illogical. Acceptance and rejection are alike conclusions; affirmation and denial are the results of processes of reasoning the validity of which needs to be tested. "I believe" and "I doubt" must alike give account to sound reason, and the one cannot claim inherent superiority over the other. Simply as a matter of fact, Thomas was a doubter; not a particularly profound doubter,

Christ's Attitude Toward Doubt

but he was honest in his doubt, and he would not profess belief while he was unconvinced. The important thing is Christ's attitude toward Thomas in his state of doubt. And, first of all, it clearly appears that Jesus did not ask Thomas to profess faith before he was clearly convinced. Such a profession is dishonest and a disrespect to truth and is the worst kind of unbelief. But it was important for Thomas that his doubt should be removed. The resurrection of Christ was so fundamental to the gospel that uncertainty concerning it would have disqualified any disciple for preaching it. If Thomas had persisted in his refusal to believe, there would have been nothing for him to do but to withdraw from any active part in the gospel propaganda. Being an honest man he would have done that. Jesus intervened to save him from falling away from his apostleship. Jesus cared, and he understood Thomas; and Jesus cares if any man's religious usefulness and progress are threatened by doubt; and no sincere man who is willing to receive and follow the truth will be left without divine help for the solving of his doubt. To no one does Christ come with more sympathetic interest than to him who is perplexed and confused in religious faith. God only

understands how lonely and hard and discouraging is the lot of one who has lost his hold on the fundamentals of faith. There is no sorrow or sadness greater than his, for his disbelief is the abandonment of his own dearest hopes. There is infinite comfort in the fact that Jesus turned tenderly and strongly to Thomas in the time of his unsettled faith, for it gives assurance that he still understands and sympathizes with the sincere doubter, and is with him in his long fight to dispel the specters of his mind, seeking to lead him into the light and into the rest and joy of believing.

CHRIST'S bearing toward Peter and his way of dealing with him on the occasion of that last meeting on the shore of the sea of Galilee appeals to more of us, and more deeply, than his spirit toward Thomas; for, while in the matter of intellectual doubt very many have been but slightly troubled, all have had painful and humiliating experience in unfaithfulness. We are greatly concerned to know what Christ's attitude may be toward one who has fallen under temptation and lapsed from loyalty. Peter's sin, while it had its roots in constitutional and tempera-

Christ the Restorer

mental weaknesses, and was preceded by many premonitions, came finally with appalling suddenness. But the reaction was instant and profound. The look of his Master—and no one but Peter could translate the meaning of that look—plunged him into the deepest sorrow and self-reproach. With his heart cleft by that inconsolable sorrow and shame he was compelled to watch from afar the tragedy of Calvary and wait through the weary hours while his Lord whom he had denied lay in pathetic silence in the tomb. But though he had denied Christ, Peter had not forsaken him. But had Jesus forsaken Peter? This is the question that haunts the hearts of multitudes. Does Jesus understand how deeply we regret our denials, how utterly abased we are because of our fall, how keenly we suffer at the remembrance of our cowardice? Does he distinguish between weakness and disloyalty? Will he give us another chance? Will he forever after, even if he grant forgiveness, think meanly of us, or will he take us back into his confidence? The answers are found in his dealings with Peter. He knew all about Peter, and knew that his was the sorest and heaviest heart among the disciples. "And tell Peter," he commanded those to whom he first appeared.

That message gave the swiftness of youth to the feet of the disconsolate disciple and restored hope to his broken heart. On that memorable morning by the sea of Galilee, while deeply probing his heart, Jesus gave him, though sorely grieved, the opportunity again to declare his love. All the old conceit of heart had gone out of the erstwhile boastful disciple. He had no disposition to say, "I love you more than these." The old Peter would not have hesitated to make that profession; but the new and chastened Peter could say, not in pride but through welling tears, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." And so the picture shows to us Christ the Restorer, to whom may turn with hope the hearts of all of those who, like Peter, have denied their Lord, but who, like him, have bitterly wept over their fall.

WE have been studying the Master through the eyes of John the beloved disciple. We have also had before our minds the pictures drawn by the other evangelists. No one of them gives us a full length portrait. No one of them gives the faintest hint of Christ's bodily appearance.

What was the Disciples' Conception of Christ?

They furnish us with many outline etchings of the great character, but they attempt no analysis and they indulge in no eulogies. They tell us a little of what he did, a little of what he said, and they give us to see him in a variety of social surroundings. They wrote as they saw and as they heard. What conception did these writers have of Christ? What manner of man was he in the eyes of those who had the best opportunity to know him, and how did they feel toward him? A few things are perfectly clear. First of all, he was to them a real man. Two of the writers give account of his birth. He was born of a woman as other men have been born. He grew as other men have done from infancy to manhood. He had all natural human appetites, and was subject to all of the limitations and necessities of the bodily life. He grew in knowledge, and was instructed as a child as other children were instructed. His appearance was no unsubstantial phantasm, but a human reality, from his birth at Bethlehem to his entombment in Joseph's sepulcher. Beyond all question, Jesus was to his disciples a man, brother of their flesh. But he was vastly more than that: he was to them God manifest in the flesh. It is not necessary for us to suppose that they had

a perfect conception of him from the beginning, or that they comprehended him in the fullness of his nature even at the end. But he was to them the Son of God as certainly as that he was the Son of man. They received him as the Messiah, clothed with all the authority for which that royal title stood. A woman was his mother, but God was his father. He exercised supernatural powers, and his great works were signs and proofs of his divine nature. The disciples accepted his teachings concerning himself, and in those teachings he declared that he was come from God, was one with God, and that he was clothed with the power and authority of God. He claimed for himself the divine prerogative to forgive sin, to preside in final judgment, and to rule as universal King. As such his disciples received him and conceived him and as such they worshiped him. He was never to them simply a man, however incomparably great; he was God revealed to them in the flesh, and they yielded to him the obedience of their will and the love of their hearts in the measure to which God alone is entitled. Let us never forget that the final picture which the Gospels give of Christ is that of his ascension into the heavens, while below, on the earth from which he was with-

drawing, was a company of men who worshiped him with outstretched hands and uplifted faces.

Christ Always the Revealer

IN becoming incarnate, Christ did not *begin* his work of revealing God, but only continued it, revealing him in his moral nature more fully than he had previously been able to do or could have done except by becoming flesh. The pre-incarnate Christ was also the Word, the Revealer of God. Christ was the eternal expression, the eternal revelation of God. He had been "God manifest," in what way or ways we may not know, to all intelligences of the universe, before the world was; he was "God manifest" during all the history of the world prior to the incarnation, in Jewish history as the Jehovah of the Abrahamic covenant, and in the history of the Gentile nations as the "Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Creation is revelation. The material universe, of which Jesus Christ is the maker, is a manifestation, partial indeed, but a wonderful manifestation of God. We can only know what the attributes of God are so far as they are displayed in some creative form.

Take power, for example. To be told that God is omnipotent without having any exhibition of his almightiness, would convey very little meaning to us. All the stupendous forces of the universe are simply the omnipotent forces of God. It is estimated that all the rivers of the world discharge a quantity of water equal to one hundred and forty-six Niagaras, and the great ocean currents, which are vast rivers in the sea, represent powers surpassing all the rivers of the world. And all this energy of the streams and of the seas is but a fraction of the power that is being steadily exerted upon the surface of the world by the sun, yonder ninety-three million miles away. But in this we are dealing only with the small fractions of the power of our solar system, and our sun with his entire planetary system is but an infinitesimal fraction of the material universe. And the agent through whom all this power was put into operation, the Maker of all this material universe with its overwhelming play of forces, was Jesus Christ, the divine Word, the everlasting Revealer of the Father. Or consider beauty. We can only know what is the sense or faculty of beauty in a man's mind in so far as he produces something beautiful. The poem, the music,

the painting, the sculpture, the building—these are some of the ways by which man has expressed the spirit of beauty in him. Now, the whole vast universe is a display of the spirit of the infinite beauty in the divine mind. With what prodigal affluence has God poured out his thoughts of beauty in the material world! Plains which are flower-sprent, hills that are forest-crowned, skies that are star-embossed, man that is angel-faced—the soul fairly swoons in its intoxication of delight as it contemplates the beauties of the world. And yet we see but little of it all. And we see that little with dull eyes. Beyond the ken and comprehension of the loftiest archangel, depth upon depth of ravishing glories, the visions of beauty sweep and rise. And in it all—fragile grace and delicacy of flower, gleam of waterfall, circling blue of sea, flash of river, majesty of mountain, morning and evening pomps of purple and gold and amethyst, crystal depths and starry splendors of the sky—we have but partial glimpses of the divine mind. And all of this is the work of the Christ, the divine Word that was made flesh; for without him was not anything made that was made. In it all he is the Revealer of the glory of the Father.

THE incarnation is permanent; that is, the Word became permanently flesh, and in the incarnation God entered into an everlasting union with human nature; and the revelation, consequently, which God began in the incarnation is not a completed but a continued and perpetual revelation. Christ did not assume the nature of man for a little while and then lay it off, and return to his former state and his former relations with mankind, as a king might disguise himself for a little while in the garb of a peasant and live among peasants, and then throw aside his peasant raiment and return to his throne, leaving the same vast gulf between him and his peasant subjects as before. That, indeed, if nothing more had been done, would have been a wonderful thing; but Christ did more than that. In the twelfth century there was great rejoicing among the English people when Henry the First, their Norman king, married Matilda, a representative of the old Anglo-Saxon line. In that marriage they saw the permanent union of the conquering sovereigns and the conquered people. Henceforth Saxons would not be slaves, and Normans masters, for now Anglo-Saxon blood would mingle with Norman blood in the veins of all

The Incarnation Permanent

succeeding kings who should sit upon the English throne. It was a permanent healing of the breach between the two peoples, the permanent joining of them in bonds of sympathy and confidence. This but faintly and imperfectly illustrates what was accomplished between God and humanity in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. He entered into perfect union with our humanity, and lifted it up into everlasting fellowship with himself. Is it not significant that the word, with its Old Testament equivalent, which John uses when he says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us," is not used elsewhere in the Scriptures except in a very exalted sense? He "dwelt among us" as he that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! "He dwelt among us" as God shall pitch his radiant tabernacle among the redeemed hosts and dwell among them! This kind of dwelling is not the residence of a day, not a passing habitation, not a temporary housing or homing, but an everlasting abiding, an immortal tabernacling with men. The incarnation was not a fleeting, transitory event, a single glorious but brief period when God entered into fellowship with human life, one

far-off, long-gone golden day, toward which we look back with infinite sighing and infinite sadness because it is never to come again. The incarnate life of Christ has run through all these nineteen centuries of human history; his face glows behind the shifting scenery of the passing ages; his voice of authority and majesty is heard over and above all the din and clamor of human strife; more imperial than the Cæsars, mightier than Constantine, more regal than Charlemagne, more invincible than Napoleon, his form has moved among the lordliest events of history, and the world is full of his presence to-day.

AND I am insisting upon this doctrine of the permanency of the incarnation, not at all as a matter of theological interest, but because it sustains the most vital and practical relations to our spiritual lives. We need an incarnate Christ, not simply as an historical record, but as a present and perpetual revelation of God to our souls. We cannot feed ourselves merely upon an historical Christ. We cannot slake our thirst from the dusty basin of a fountain that was once full of water. We cannot satisfy ourselves with

Enduring Need of an Incarnate Christ

the bread of two thousand years ago. We cannot obtain light from the cold ashes of a torch that burned brightly for another age. We are not healed by the healing that came to the sick, the impotent, the leprous of other times. We require living water, living bread, a present light, a present physician. In our weariness and discouragements, in our moments of weakness and heart-sinking, we must feel that we have a High Priest who is touched with the sense of our infirmities; in our deep contritions, when the slow tears of penitence drop day and night, there must be One who will permit us to bathe his feet with our tears, and who will look tenderly and compassionately upon us, and bid us go and sin no more. In the moments when we most long to pray, but when our lips are sealed, and we long for some one to say to God for us all that lies unuttered and unutterable in our hearts, we must be able to feel that we have an all-prevailing Advocate with the Father, who can interpret all there is in our hearts, and who will join his petitions with ours. In pain, and trial, and sore want, in sickness, in misfortune, in fierce temptation, we must have

One who sees all suffering, comprehends all wants,
All weakness fathoms, can supply all needs.

THE men of mightiest and most enduring influence in the world have been teachers. Solomon built for himself splendid palaces, and amassed great riches, and lived with a regal pomp that dazzled the amazed nations; but it is not for these things that he is chiefly remembered, but for his treasury of moral wisdom bequeathed to the world in his proverbs. All the external splendor of his kingdom long ago disappeared, but his teachings remain and will remain forever. In Athens, at the culmination of her power and glory, lived a man in strange contrast to the life that surrounded him. He was without wealth, he would have no public office, he was unsightly in appearance, he walked barefoot in the streets, and sought only an opportunity to talk with men and teach them what seemed to him the truth of things. They could not endure his teachings, and gave him the cup of hemlock, and buried him out of sight, and went on with their petty politics and greedy money-making and civil wars. But Socrates and the two other great teachers that came out of his intellectual loins are the supreme glory of Greece. These teachers of high truth have lived in the thought of the world through

As Teacher Jesus is the World's Highest Master

nearly two and a half millenniums, and will hold their positions on their thrones of power until the end of time. The real kings of men have always been the teachers of religious and moral truth. So that, in assuming the office of a teacher, Jesus revealed his discernment of the means of the highest and most enduring power. As the world's greatest teacher he must become the world's greatest master. As King of the kingdom of truth all other kingdoms must come into subjection to him.

The first of Christ's qualifications for teachership is found in his character. Whoever would be the supreme moral teacher of men must represent supreme moral perfection. For in the realm of spiritual truth a man cannot really teach more than he himself has embodied of the truth. For here not the intellect but the heart is the organ of perception, and that truth may be really apprehended the heart must be transparently pure. I have always looked with something almost of reverence upon the lens of a great telescope. It is the medium through which the hidden mysteries of the sky are to be discovered. What infinite care is employed in its making! It must be clear as a dewdrop; it must be

polished to crystal smoothness; it must be ground to exactest angles; it must be kept untarnished; for any flaw, any impurity, any error in structure will tell in the reflection which it will give. And every time the astronomer turns the crystal eye of his telescope toward the heavens nature is saying to him in the inflexible laws of light: "Only to the pure, to the perfect, will the secrets of the universe be revealed." What the lens of the telescope is to the stars the heart is in relation to the kingdom of truth. And he who will undertake to speak with absolute moral authority must be faultlessly pure. And here Christ stands alone among the teachers of the world. He only was without sin. Other teachers viewed truth through the discolored, warped, and distorted medium of minds and hearts that had come under the deranging influence of sin. But the heart and mind of Christ turned toward truth as a lens absolutely without fault. In consequence of this he was able to say, as no other man had ever been able to say, "I am the truth." So when it is demanded by what distinguishing authority Christ assumes to teach men moral truth, the reply is, By virtue of his matchless moral perfection, by right of his untainted holiness.

CHRIST'S second distinguishing qualification for teachership is the relation which he sustained to the Father. In a preceding study we have referred to some of the fundamental relations which the Son sustains to the Father. That relation cannot be better expressed than by the statement that the Father is the source of all things and the Son is the expression of all things. So we have seen it to be in relation to the origin of the material universe. The thought of creation, the plan of creation, if we may use a term familiar to our own experience, belongs to the Father. The execution or realization of the divine thought was the work of the Son, by whom all things were made. The pattern of all things lies in the depth of the Father's mind; the projection of that pattern into the visible, external universe was the work of the Son. Now, what is true of the relation of the Father and the Son in the production of the material universe is true also in the world of moral truth. The Father is the source of all truth, the Son is the expression of all truth. The Son originates no truth, as he originated no conception of any created thing. But he expresses the truth that lies in the Father's mind and nature, just as he built

As Teacher Jesus Was the Interpreter of the Father

the Father's thoughts into the worlds. We must grasp this conception or we will be unable to understand the position which Christ occupies as a teacher. Jesus never departed from his office of Divine Word, the Revealer of the Father, but always spoke as the interpreter of the Father. He alone dwelt in the bosom of the Father, and so he alone was able to declare him. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven." "He that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him." "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father has taught me, I speak these things. And he that hath sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." "I speak that which I have seen with my Father." "Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God." "And the Jews marveled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me." "If any man will do the will of my Father he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I

speak of myself." "But the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting; whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." "All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

We are able now to see why it was that Christ taught as one having authority. He knew by the most direct and simple vision the truth of the things which he spoke. This explains the manner of his teaching. He never reasons to what he states. He simply and calmly states it as something which he knows to be true. We do not need to reason to that which we see. We open our eyes and look about us and describe the things which report themselves to our sight. We need no logical process to convince us that they are there. So did Christ deal with truth. He saw it, and merely declared it, content to let the truth itself be its own highest proof. In this respect Christ differs from the greatest of his followers who wrote concerning him. Paul "reasoned of righteousness and temperance and judgment to come," reasoned mightily, until a corrupt ruler trembled. What a marvel of

logic is his great letter to the Romans, in which he builds up his structure, stone by stone, in which he handles the facts and principles of life and the Scriptures with the power of a giant. But Christ never labored through any such logical processes, because he did not need to do so. He knew truth and declared it; he saw truth and spoke it. He did not climb to the heights of truth, but stood on all heights, saw in one unbounded vision the whole kingdom of truth. So he spoke with an authority which no teacher who must reason to his conclusions can ever speak.

AND this view of Christ as a teacher must show us how vain a thing it is to compare him with other religious teachers of history. He has no rivals. Not that other teachers have not uttered much truth, and some of them had uttered many of the truths which he taught. The fact that the substance of some of Christ's sayings is to be found in the writings of ancient sages does not detract from the worth of Christ as a teacher nor lower him in the least from his preëminence. Our study of him has brought us to see him as the "Light which lighteth every man

Other Teachers Not Rivals to Jesus

which cometh into the world." He was in the world before his incarnation; and I do not hesitate to believe that he was the author of all truth voiced by all the wise teachers of all ages and nations. They were given to see in part what he saw as a whole. They are the lights of their times and nations; he is the Light of the world, the Sun that needs not to be jealous of any mind that caught and reflected some of his rays. No one can possibly doubt the fact that for now nearly nineteen hundred years the teachings of Jesus have been the master-force in the world. They have transformed the highest thought of the world; they have set the standards of judgment by which men and institutions have been tested; they have readjusted men's conceptions of God and of man; they have drawn out all of the richest and noblest elements in the soul of man and filled the world with a new spirit and a new life. No one can doubt the source from which this transforming power has come. And it is plain that the teachings of Christ have not expended their power. At this moment they are a mightier force in the world than ever before. The ideals of life which they set forth are pressing themselves with almost revolutionizing power upon society. Never before has

there been such a demand to measure institutions and life by the standards of Jesus as now. We must give reasonable account of this enduring power. The teachings of Christ are very brief and very simple. An hour or two would be sufficient to read all his utterances which have been preserved; and they are of such a character that the most ordinary mind can grasp the substance of their meaning. What is the secret of their power? As we look at the sun at midday its disk as it appears to the eye does not measure more than a few inches. Its apparent size appears utterly inadequate to account for its mighty power. We know, what men once did not know, that the sun is greater than it seems. Out of the solemn depths of an almost measureless distance the sun shines upon us, pouring out its exhaustless heat and radiance upon the earth, maintaining all its life and all its energy from age to age. It is so with Christ. We must form our estimate of him by the power which he exerts. It is no more certain that the sun is the chief source of life and heat in the external world than that Christ is the source of life and power in the moral world.

All Highest Teaching is Interpretation

AND this brings us to see the eternal law which governs all highest teaching. It must be an interpretation of God. Teachers are great in proportion as they are able to discern and speak the thoughts of God. When Christ said, as he did repeatedly, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true," he announces a law for all teachers through all time. Self-witnessing is always false witnessing. The world is full of such witnesses, teachers who speak only for themselves, whose ears are not open to the divine Voice, who receive no messages from above, who look not in upon the mind of God, and so never interpret God to the world. These are the false prophets of the race, and their name is legion. Such teachers are shallow and profitless and misguiding; their words are mere babble and madness and falseness. Every teacher is great in proportion as he is able to approximate Christ in saying, "I can do nothing of mine own self; as I hear I judge; and my judgment is just because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." And to none is this truth more certainly known than to the great teachers themselves. The really great masters have ever been reverent men

who have walked thoughtfully and with bowed heads, listening to the Voice that only the stilled and humbled spirit can hear, and looking always to the things which are invisible. These master teachers have always been men of poverty of spirit, without vanity or boasting. Real greatness lifts the soul into the presence of God, and no man can be vain or proud who sees or feels God's presence. The great thinker has a deep sense that his best thoughts are least his. When the soul has the highest and widest vision of truth, then it is most truly felt that truth is a revelation of God. In its most exalted states, when the mind looks most deeply into the heart of things, it is the most aware that it is seeing visions. "I feel," exclaimed a great musician, when he had completed one of his great compositions—"I feel as if I had been in other worlds." As Mrs. Browning has so finely told us, there is a wide difference between the way in which the genuinely great view their works and the way in which the common world views them. We hear a great oration, read a great poem, see a great picture or statue, observe a great piece of architecture, consider a great invention or discovery, or listen to the harmony of a great musical composition, and we cry: "This is the work of man!

How great! How wonderful!" But the great men whose praise we thus sound are perhaps even while we speak, alone, with bowed heads, saying: "We saw these things; they were revealed to us; they are not ours. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be glory and honor." Such a worshipful and reverent sense have the greatest students of the material universe had, when they have put their souls in tune

> With the lava-lymph
> That trickles from successive galaxies,
> Still drop by drop adown the finger of God,
> In still new worlds.

Christ's Sorrow of Sympathy

JESUS wept." The entire significance of this incident is the illustration which it gives of the simple, human sympathy of Jesus. There may have been, there doubtless was, a tenderness and depth to his sorrow and sympathy that exceeded that of others; but his sorrow was natural, simple, spontaneous human sympathy. He had natural, sensitive tenderheartedness. His sorrow did not spring out of the circumstance that Lazarus was dead. To him that did not appeal as a calamity. He wept not on account of the death, which to others seemed a dreadful thing, but purely

out of sympathy with the sisters. He sorrowed on account of their sorrow. It was enough that they were heartbroken. He sympathized with them none the less because of the fact that if they had had larger knowledge, they would have had less grief. Their sorrow was a reality, and it was that which touched him. Indeed, Christ's sympathy with us in our sorrows does not depend upon the question whether we correctly understand the events, whether what we regard as a calamity is in reality such, or a disguised blessing. If we knew the full nature of an event that brings us great sorrow, we would greatly rejoice instead; but we do not know, and in most cases cannot know. But God knows, and when he sorrows with us he does so not because the event that has happened to us is an evil, but he is simply touched with sympathy with us in our pain. Christ was and is infinitely pitiful. His heart was touched and is still touched with every case of human sorrow. Christ is forever putting himself in loving contact with our humanity. No matter how far our sorrows may be due to our shortsightedness, or may be punishments for our sins, we may be sure that God sorrows with us, and pities us, even as a father pitieth his children. But there is another aspect of Christ's

sorrow. He experienced the sorrow of disappointment. I do not mean disappointment in the narrow and personal sense, the disappointment that we experience in the failure to obtain some expected good for ourselves. Christ's sorrow might properly be called vicarious, the sorrow which springs from the failure and the loss of others. This is revealed in the incident of his weeping over the city of Jerusalem. On the heights of the Mount of Olives Jesus stopped and gazed down upon the sacred city. All its history, so rich and wonderful, unrolled itself to his mind. Its succession of kings, its long line of prophets, the armies that had marched out of its gates to victory or defeat, its downfall and its restoration, its days of glory and its days of shame, all passed before him. Then he saw the storm of utter and remediless ruin that was soon to break upon the doomed city. And as he saw all this swiftly coming woe, this inevitable and fearful downfall, he wept over the city. The word used in the original of this account is one that represents most passionate grief. In the account of his grief at the tomb of Lazarus it is said that he wept; but the word there employed simply implies that he shed silent tears. But as he looked down upon

Jerusalem, he broke forth into passionate lamentations, he wept aloud, in almost heart-broken agony of grief. It was the grief of disappointment. He grieved for the lost opportunities of his people. He sorrowed for the splendid future which might have been secured for the magnificent city which was now no longer possible. It might have been so great, but must now be so utterly cast down. The day of its glorious visitation had come and gone, and its house was soon to be left unto it desolate. And this sorrow of disappointment which Christ exhibited for Jerusalem, we may be sure, he yet feels for every life that has let its great opportunities go by unimproved. How utterly disappointing to God must many lives appear! What possibilities once lay, fair and inviting, before many whose soul-temples are now leveled with the dust, not one stone of virtue left upon another. But it is all-important that we see and feel that Christ sorrows over the ruin which men bring upon themselves. Jerusalem's opportunity was forever past. Her destruction was inevitable; her ruin was without remedy. Jesus saw that. The doom could not be averted. He had done his best to prevent it coming to this. But they would not. Now it must be so. But Christ

weeps over the ruin he cannot prevent. And this throws a strong light upon the divine view of the soul's loss, and reveals the spirit in which God's punishments are administered. He is sorry, though he cannot help. A mother will cast herself down and weep over the grave of a son whom she could not save. And so God grieves over his lost children. Hell is the vast grave of the universe in which the disappointed hopes of God are buried, and over which his heart breaks in infinite compassion.

The Martyr's Sorrow

BUT we must consider another phase of Christ's sorrow, the sorrow of martyrdom. This sorrow found its expression in the garden of Gethsemane. Hitherto we have been able to understand with some degree of adequacy the nature of his sorrow. But now he passes beyond us. Like his disciples whom he left behind him, while he went into the deeper shadows of the olive garden for his great soul-struggle, we also can only wait in sore amazement on the border of his martyr-sorrows, feeling something of its mysteriousness, but unable to penetrate its gloom or measure its depths. In the presence of this deep sorrow of the

Son of God, we can properly do little else than fall on our faces in silent awe. The sorrow of that night was not merely fear of death. Upon his soul that night, on that silent hill of agony, broke the spiritual storm which had been sullenly gathering through all the ages. All the woe of the world, like a thick cloud, hung over him, and drenched him with its bloody rain; all the cruel winds of malice, and hatred, and ingratitude broke out from the dark and stony heart-caverns of the race and smote him with relentless bitterness and pitiless malignity. The awful horror of the sin of the world settled upon his sinless soul, and all the demons of man's selfishness and falsehood and envy and cruelty and lust looked out upon him from the darkness and mocked him. We may not enter into the mystery of that hour. We may not understand why the wrath of God was poured out upon this sinless Substitute, why the sword of malice pierced his heart of infinite purity. But so it was. He trod the wine press of the wrath of God alone. Gathering about him the folds of sorrow, as heavy and somber as the gloom with which the starless midnight mantles the hills, bearing the sins of the world in his martyr-heart, he went down into the valley of

the shadow of death, that the gates of paradise might be opened to men.

The Sorrow of Abandonment

BUT we have not yet reached the culmination of Christ's sorrow. We have followed him through the sorrow of sympathy, through the sorrow of disappointment, through the sorrow of martyrdom; but the midnight of his sorrow was the sorrow of abandonment. One of his own disciples forsook him and betrayed him. The others fled at the first assault of his enemies, and Peter denied him in the hall of judgment. Nameless and indescribable insults were heaped upon him. A weak and wicked Roman judge passed sentence upon him. We may not measure the suffering which all this meant to a nature like his; but all this he endured without cry or without trembling in the strength of his spirit; for all this he had expected, and against all this he had girded himself in the struggle of Gethsemane. But now at last the shadow of an eclipse fell upon him more appalling than anything that he had yet experienced, the horror of a great darkness for which he was not prepared. In the times of his sorest stress and weariness and pain the

clear consciousness of his Father's presence had sustained and comforted him. Again and again his Father's voice had borne witness to him. In the gloom of the soul-agony through which he had passed the preceding night in the garden there was never a moment when the sense of his Father's presence and his Father's support forsook him. But now in this bitter hour, when he is abandoned of all the world, and his soul in its deep agony is reaching out after the divine support which had hitherto never failed him, even that appeared to have been withdrawn. This was the sorrow of sorrows. This was the death of deaths. None but God's own heart can ever understand what was involved in that bitter cry of his Son, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Beyond that, sorrow could not go. This was the last bitter dregs of that bitter cup which could not pass from him. It relieves the agony of the record to know that this sense of divine abandonment was but for a brief time. The dismal eclipse passed, and the Father's face came back again, and the dying Christ was able to say in the final moment, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The lowest note in the awful *Miserere* had been touched; and then the theme changed, and the notes began

to climb the scale of joy; and through all the centuries the joy-note has throbbed on above all the sadness and the sorrow of the world, leading up to the climax of universal and eternal praise. The midnight of history struck and passed, and slowly the kindling hours led on to dawn, and still, with golden feet, lead on to everlasting noon.

The Moral Character of God Revealed in the Life of Jesus

THE great purpose of Christ's incarnation, as a revelation, was to exhibit the moral attributes of God more perfectly. Men needed more thoroughly to understand and appreciate the character of God; not simply to have more perfectly expressed definitions of the moral attributes of God, but to have their conceptions of God vitalized and made real. The exalted virtues of Jehovah required to be translated into the terms of human experience, and to be displayed on the plane and in the sphere of human life, that men might not simply in the terms of the intellect apprehend God, but that by response of their own hearts they might feel what God is like. The disposition of God needed to be illustrated, and in such wise as to beget the same disposition in men. Mere dog-

matic statement of fact was insufficient. Simply to have said "God is love" would not have awakened in the minds of men more than the faintest dream of what God's love really is. How the mere abstract notion of God's love is expanded and flooded with golden light, and made to palpitate with reality, when in the light of the self-sacrificing and atoning life and death of Christ we read, that "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son" for its redemption! The injunction, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," was but dimly comprehended as fact, and but faintly felt as motive, while it remained simply command and declaration; but it meant infinitely more when Christ came under the common conditions of human life, and was tempted in all points as men are tempted, and yet without sin. When Christ lived out a perfectly spotless yet earnestly active life before men, that gave the world a new conception of holiness and a new understanding of the divine perfection. Men would not and could not have understood that God is universal Father, loving all men impartially, and being no respecter of persons. But when Christ came ignoring all national and social distinctions, preaching to the poor, talking familiarly with the Samaritan woman, eating

with publicans and sinners, and commissioning his disciples to preach his gospel to all nations, the Fatherhood of God, and with it the brotherhood of man, began to take on new meaning. The mercy of God needed illustration. The world had never risen to the thought of the loving and sympathetic element in God's mercy. That he would forgive, assuredly, was believed; but his forgiveness was thought of as judicial and cold. Forgiveness was the legal sequence of sacrifice; and smoking and reeking altars were maintained to appease Jehovah's wrath and gain his favor. But that God loved sinners, and yearned over them, and pitied them—this was not understood. But when Christ came and healed the sicknesses and infirmities of men, and said to the transgressor with infinite tenderness, "Your sins are forgiven thee"—when he spoke so kindly to outcast women that their hearts were broken, and they came and washed his feet with their tears, and broke over him boxes of precious ointment—this gave the world a new conception of the divine mercy and tenderness. Men could understand this; but they had not been accustomed to think of God in this wise. It was all so new that the disciples adjusted themselves very slowly to the new conception. It never,

indeed, seems to have been vitally clear to them that the unostentatious, ministering Master whom they followed and to whom they were bound by such tender affection, was in reality God manifest in the flesh, until they had seen him received up into the heavens out of their sight, and the Holy Spirit had come upon them, enlightening their understandings. The very simplicity of Christ's character and the absolute human naturalness of his life caused even those most intimately associated with him to fail to fully recognize the fact that he was God. When, in the synagogue in his own native city of Nazareth, he read in the hearing of the people one of the grandest of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah, and closing the book, looked calmly into their faces and said, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears," they were offended in him. Was it to this merely that all the gorgeous dreams of the centuries were to come? Was it merely of this carpenter's son, this peasant youth whom they had known from infancy, that dying Jacob, and Moses, face-illumined from the Mount of God, and rapt Isaiah, and Ezekiel, with lips burning from the touch of celestial fire, and Daniel, touched by the hand of the swift-winged Gabriel, and royal David, who

foresaw and hailed the coming King of Glory —was it merely of this unlearned villager that this stately line of prophets and kings had spoken? Incredible! Monstrous presumption and blasphemy, that this young man should pretend to be the long-expected Shiloh, the incarnate Son of God! His disciples had come to hold him in profound reverence, and had confessed their faith in his Messiahship, yet evidently expecting that he would soon drop the mask of humility and simplicity, and mount to the throne of power. But for all their confession of faith they had not really recognized him. He had spoken, indeed, most wonderful and gracious words, he had wrought manifold miracles in their sight; but he had spoken so simply, and his miracles had been performed so unostentatiously and naturally, that it scarcely suggested the thought of God. So when Christ, testing their comprehension of him, said, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also," Philip's quick and honest response was elicited, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us." And when He said to them, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also," while they were not offended, for they trusted Him with perfect confidence, they could only silently wonder at what they

could not, for its very simplicity, understand.

And yet, even as Jacob awoke from his dream under a sky that he had seen "grow ruddy with the deepening feet of angels," and at awe cried out, "Surely God was in this place and I knew it not," the disciples, awakened at last as he was lifted up into the heavens before their eyes, and "a cloud received him out of their sight," realized that they had walked the earth for the space of three years with the Son of God without really recognizing him—yet, even yet, the thought of the world seeks others for the signs of divinity in Christ in the things that were least divine. We come slowly to this idea, that when God most perfectly reveals himself to us he will appear most closely akin to our own natures and upon a plane where by the interpretation of our own consciousness we can the most perfectly understand him. We ponder yet over the words of the beloved disciple, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," and when we think of the nature of that glory we are still in our bondage to the sensual likely, first of all, to think of the external signs and wonders

for which the spiritually blind first generation clamored, rather than of the transcendently simple, the tenderly holy and divinely human life and character. O fools and blind! that we should not comprehend that Christ's glory did not consist in material display! That we should forget that it was not because he turned water into wine, and multiplied the loaves and fishes, and stilled the tempest, and raised the dead, that he was given a name that is above every name, but because "He humbled himself and made himself of no reputation, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." When will the world come really to feel that a Christ of tender human sympathies, whose eyes could fill with tears at sight of human grief, and who took little children in his arms and blessed them, is greater, and shows us more of God, than if he had come at the head of a million angels with all the flaming banners of heaven in his van!

THE life that Christ lived in Palestine was very brief and circumscribed, and, except in a generic way, accomplished but very little; but when to the sight of men his life in the world ended it really

in the truest sense began. He came again to live in the lives of his followers. And so his larger life has been lived out in Christian history, the record of the centuries is his continued biography. He has lived again in the saints of all ages; the beauty and glory of his character have been illustrated in the lives of all who have received him into their hearts. The sanctity of his holy birth has thrown a blessed light over the motherhood and infancy of the world. His feet have pressed the soil of every land, and his lips have uttered the speech of every tongue in those who have gone forth as his heralds. His meekness, his patience, his tenderness, his sincerity, his unselfishness, his love have appeared again in millions of illumined faces, in multiplied deeds of kindly charity, in self-sacrifices and noble self-denials, in forgiveness and in bonds of brotherly love. He has stood by the world's beds of pain and laid his tender touch upon the sick and suffering, and many a soul drifting out into the deep mystery of death has seen again his smile of hope and cheer in the bended face of some minister of mercy. The old miracle of the multiplied loaves and fishes has been repeated over and over again in the generous charities which have responded to the cry of

History Christ's Continued Biography

hunger; and many a Magdalene has recognized him again in the pitying look that is without scorn, and the pure, strong hand extended in kindly help. He has borne again and again his heavy cross, and gone to martyrdom amid flames and blood in those who have witnessed for the truth before judges and kings, and has risen again in the repeated triumphs of his cause. His voice has been heard in the great reformers who have called the generations to repentance, and his love has expressed itself in the great philanthropists who have taken the world's woes upon their hearts, and his purposes have been unfolded and carried forward in the great world-wide enterprises of his kingdom. This has been continued manifestation, continued and cumulative revelation —manifestation of the Christly character in redeemed humanity, and the revelation of the divine purposes in the unfoldings of history. But there is a still nearer view of this truth, and one that gives it a more practical interest for us, that God is revealed to us in the characters and lives of the Christian men and women about us. Christ is in the modern no less than the mediæval saint. We need not shrink from this thought. Christ identified himself with his disciples of the nineteenth

as well as of the first century. I am not ashamed of my brethren. There are men and women, many of them, whom it is my privilege to know, who reveal Christ to me. They have the spirit and mind that were in him. They give proof in the fruits of their lives that they abide in him. Beholding as in a glass the glory of God, they have been changed into the same image from glory to glory. We fail to see this as we should because of our sensuous misconception of the nature of God's highest glory and our indisposition to look for him in humble lives. We walk side by side with those whose garments are filled with the fragrance of paradise, and whose lives are rich in the Christly elements of love and faith and purity and spiritual-mindedness, and our eyes are holden that we do not recognize the fact that the divine glory is shining through them. By and by when they are not, because God has taken them, we say as the disciples said after their walk with Christ to Emmaus, "Did not our hearts burn within us as we walked by the way?" And the lingering radiance of their lives gives proof that God was with them. Christ still walks the earth in humble guise, in peasant's garb and in toiler's sunbrowned face; and his glory now, as in far Judæa, consists in

simplicity and purity of spirit, and in loftiness and nobleness of thought and purpose. Blessed are the eyes that are able to see his face, and the ears that are able to recognize his voice, in the common ways of life!

The World's Supreme Need is Spiritual Life

AND most certainly the world's supreme need at Christ's coming was spiritual life. The spiritual vitality of the race as a whole was well nigh extinguished. The hearts of men were as dry urns filled with the white ashes of despair. The old religions, never more than artificial stimulants of man's religious nature, had lost their power. The oracles no longer spoke with authority. The gods, never loved, were no longer reverenced or feared. Their very existence, or the existence of any gods or god, was denied by thoughtful minds. Skepticism of the profoundest kind, deep, widespread, fatal, had fallen upon the mind of the world. Priests laughed in each other's faces as they performed their hollow rites. Philosophy, the best of which derived what vitality it had from religious faith, withered with the drought of its nourishing spring. The world groveled and festered in the mire of material-

ism. Sensualism, gross and sickening, made the very air heavy with its noxious vapors. It was the mesozoic age of immorality, when, as in the old geologic time, the race of reptiles had reached its culmination, and huge dinosaurians wallowed in the mud, and fed on the rank herbage of the vast and vaporous swamps: so then all the coarse and vicious appetites in human nature reached the culmination of their development, and cruelty and selfishness, and lust and unrestrained ambition—moral serpents grown huge and monstrous—wallowed in their corruption, or basked bestially in their slime, and fed greedily on the rank growths of the heavy atmosphere of that deep-sunken age. Even in Palestine, under the shadow of the white-walled temple, even there also had spiritual death fallen: and the symbols for the Israel of God were the barren fig tree, blighted with a curse, and the whited sepulcher, full of corruption and dead men's bones! The few finer spirits of the age, that were not involved in the swirl of passion, stood impotently aloof, living in mute obscurity, or uttering protests that were unheard or unheeded by the soul-drunken multitudes. Some, in utter dismay at what they saw, gave themselves up to despair, and saw for the future

only greater evils or the continuance of evils that could not be made greater. Some turned in deep contempt and bitterness upon the race, and spurned the nature of a being capable of such corruption, and poured out the vials of burning satire and blistering curses upon mankind. Others, sick and hopeless, indeed, of the world as it was, but not wholly despondent for the future, stood as the prayerful prophets of a better age. Sure that society had in itself no regenerating forces, these inspired souls stretched out their hands to the deliverance which they felt must be near, coming from above. Aged and devout Simeon, upon whom the Holy Ghost rested, lingered in the service of the temple, waiting for the consolation of Israel. Virgil, having caught the strain, perhaps, from Isaiah, sang, for the better hope of the Gentile world, of the new age about to begin; of a new race sent down from heaven; of a wondrous child soon to be born, under whose reign any remaining traces of the world's wickedness should be canceled; when the plains should grow yellow with the soft ears of corn; when the ruddy grapes should hang upon the wild brambles, and the hard oak should distill honey like dewdrops. The best yearnings of the holiest of all the ages

came up in the hearts of the few who lived apart upon the hills of faith and hope, who, while the mad crowd reveled and clamored beneath, stood in the darkness watching for the breaking of the morn. Into the world at such a time as this, when its own resources were exhausted, when the artificial structure of its civilization, once so brilliant and seemingly substantial, was falling into rapid decay, when the souls of men turned back sick upon themselves—then came Christ, came after so long delay, as if waiting until it should be admitted that the world was spiritually dead, even as afterward he delayed his coming to Bethany until Lazarus had been four days in the sepulcher—then he came, saying, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

AND now after these nearly two thousand years of Christian history have passed we are in a position to say whether Christ did bring new life into the world, and whether that life has shown itself to be perennial and progressive in its energies. And here we have no abstruse problem of difficult and doubtful solution, but we

confront the fact of Christian civilization itself for our answer. Whatever men may hold with regard to the peculiar and high claims of Christianity, no open mind will deny that Christ's coming into the world marked the most significant era in its history. No one can deny that there is such a thing as Christian civilization. Certainly, unless we close our eyes to the most manifest connections of cause and effect, we must grant that the impulse which started the world on a new line of progress, which broke the spell of its madness and stirred it out of its hopelessness and quickened it into new and mightier endeavors, was imparted by Jesus Christ. And I think it is just as manifest that the generic impulse which Christ gave to the life of the world was a purely spiritual impulse. Society under Christianity has developed in other than strictly spiritual lines; but these have been only lateral growths that have put forth from the central trunk, whose nourishing life, whose deepest roots, are spiritual. The movement that has spread out broadly into Christian civilization had its beginnings in purely religious elements. A strange Teacher, connected with whose birth some wonderful events had taken place, appeared in Palestine and chose from the ranks

Has Christ Brought Spiritual Life to the World?

of common men a few to be his intimate disciples. These he instructed, not dogmatically but by practical association with himself, by permitting them to see his works and to hear his words, in the fundamental principles of his doctrine. His was no such school as the great teachers before him had founded. Not in painted Stoa, nor secluded Lyceum, nor scholastic grove, did this Teacher and Prophet of the new dispensation impart his instructions. His school was not included within any walls, his rostrum was the mountain or the seaside, his pupils all who would hear or see, his themes the deep and simple verities of spiritual truth. He came to impart life to men, and so he put himself in contact with men. He placed himself where he could feel the heart-throbs of the world, where he could see the smiles and frowns of men, where he could hear the songs and the sighs of the human heart. His mission was to human life, and he addressed himself to all its phases. He knew what was in man, and he touched man's life at every point. He belonged to no class, to no sect, he was confined to no circle. He went to the marriage feast, he stood in the synagogue and the temple, he talked with men in the market places, he sat down to meat in the homes both of the

rich and the poor, of the Pharisee and the publican; he went where the sick were consuming with disease; his touch cooled the fever-stricken and cleansed the leper; he stood in houses of mourning and wept with the bereaved; he dealt reverently with old age, and took little children in his arms; he went everywhere that human life was, in crowded city, in remote village or open country. He knew no caste, he respected no prejudices. He talked with the sinful woman of Samaria, he submitted to the touch of the repentant Magdalene. He spoke in words so clear and simple that the most untutored could understand. He taught the secrets of life. He showed that religion was inward, not outward. He unlocked the heart and revealed its secrets. He insisted that rites and ceremonies were subordinate and temporary, and that sincerity and truth and love were chief and permanent. He taught unselfishness, self-sacrifice, unworldliness, and broad philanthropy based on human brotherhood, and he taught these things not in words merely but in his own life. He showed the value of the present life by revealing its connections with the future life. He exalted the estimate of the human soul by awakening to consciousness its nobler elements, and pointing to its destiny of im-

mortality. And finally, he closed his life a sacrifice for the race, and established himself forever as the supreme object of the world's affection, the chief source of its inspiration, and the chief object of its faith and hope.

WE have reached the end of these fragmentary studies. The writer has pursued them in the spirit of deepening reverence. He has not permitted himself to forget for a single moment that he was writing concerning his own great Master. His hope is that the effect of these studies and meditations will be to set the character of Jesus a little more clearly before the eyes of those who may read these pages, producing in all hearts a stronger faith and a richer love. I have been trying to determine what Jesus meant to the men who stood closest to him during his earthly ministry. What did they see in him, and what was the image of him that was reflected in their minds and hearts? There are no more vital questions which each one of us must answer for himself: "What do I see in the face of Jesus Christ? What does he mean to me? What image of him is reflected in my own soul?" There questions are very

What is Christ to Us?

imperfectly answered by our printed creeds. Jesus Christ cannot be comprehended within any formal definition. What he is to each man must be expressed in the terms of each man's life. Every man must paint for himself the portrait of Christ. Indeed, the four Gospels do not reveal to us the spiritual portrait enshrined in the hearts of the writers. These Gospels are biographies, but it requires autobiography of the most self-revealing kind to tell us what place Christ holds in any man's life. John's epistles, throbbing with the power of a great love, tell us what Jesus was to him more fully than is revealed even in his marvelous Gospel of spiritual insight. Unless we reject his own testimony and the testimony of his disciples we must believe that Jesus was the Son of God. But let each one of us in the silence of his own heart answer the question, "Is Jesus Christ to me the Son of God in truth and as a living reality?" To each of us he is divine only to the extent to which we give him divine recognition and divine enthronement in our lives. It is in vain for us in our theology to say unto him, "Lord, Lord," unless we also do his will. The gospel biographies of Christ will profit us little unless he lives in us as the life of our souls.

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